# Indian Sculpture



Volume 2

Pratapaditya Pal

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## Volume 2

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Volume 2

700–1800

# Indian Sculpture

by Pratapaditya Pal

A Catalogue of the
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
Collection

Los Angeles County Museum of Art
*in association with*
University of California Press
Berkeley, Los Angeles, London

Copublished by the
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
5905 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90036
and
University of California Press
Berkeley, Los Angeles, London

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Edited by Kathleen Preciado
Designed in Los Angeles
by Renée Cossutta and Judith Lausten
Photography by Steve Oliver and
Department of Photographic Services
Los Angeles County Museum of Art
unless otherwise credited
Typeset in Garamond typefaces
by Continental Typographics, Inc.,
Chatsworth, California
Printed by Nissha Printing Co., Ltd.,
Kyoto, Japan

This project is supported in part by a grant
from the National Endowment for the Arts.

In the transliteration of names and terms, diacritical marks have been omitted, except in the Bibliography and Index; they also have been retained in selected words used only once.

Dimensions are in inches (in) and centimeters (cm), height preceding width, unless otherwise indicated. For most sculptures height is the only dimension provided.

Numbers in brackets refer to catalogue entries.

Cover:
*The Goddess Sarasvati* [63], by Jagadeva
(active c. 1150), Gujarat; 1156, marble.

Library of Congress Cataloging
in Publication Data

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
(Revised for vol. 2)

Indian sculpture.

Includes indexes.
Bibliography: p.
Contents: v. 1. Circa 500 B.C.–A.D. 700.–
v. 2. 700–1800.
1. Sculpture, Indic–Catalogs. 2. Sculpture–
California–Los Angeles–Catalogs. 3. Los Angeles
County Museum of Art–Catalogs. I. Pal, Pratapaditya.
NB1002.L67 1986 732'.44'074019494 86-15283
ISBN 0-87587-129-1 (v. 1: pbk.)
ISBN 0-520-05991-3 (v. 1: Univ. of Calif. Press)
ISBN 0-520-05992-1 (v. 1: Univ. of Calif. Press: pbk.)

*Indian Sculpture, Volume 2*
ISBN 0-87587-148-18 (v. 11: pbk.)
ISBN 0-520-06477-1 (v. 11: Univ. of Calif. Press)
ISBN 0-520-06479-8 (v. 11: Univ. of Calif. Press: pbk.)

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# Foreword

This is the fourth volume in a series of catalogues raisonnés of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's well-known Indian and Southeast Asian collection. The core of this collection was acquired in 1969 from Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck, but the diversity and depth of the museum's holdings from this area today is the result of the efforts of Dr. Pratapaditya Pal, the senior curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art, who, since joining the museum in 1970, has worked diligently to augment these holdings. The richness of the collection is reflected by the fact that this is the second volume devoted to the museum's group of Indian sculptures.

The period covered here, 700–1800, is an exceedingly complex one due to regional distinctions and major religious developments that occurred in India during this time. This was the period when the subcontinent witnessed an enormous surge of piety, and thousands of religious edifices were built across the land. The range of iconographic forms and the variety of materials and techniques as well as the artistic inventiveness presented by these works is dazzling. Through introductory essays for each region Dr. Pal admirably elucidates the essence of this art and provides a penetrating overview of the significant aspects of the period, which should prove valuable to scholars and the general public. His detailed catalogue entries furnish a wealth of information on this significant group of sculptures, many of which are published here for the first time. This catalogue thus offers the reader a rare opportunity to comprehend more accurately than is usually possible the extent of artistic endeavor in India.

Earl A. Powell III
*Director*
*Los Angeles County Museum of Art*

*The Indian Subcontinent and Afghanistan*


Soviet Central Asia
Turkestan
Amu Darya
Hindu Kush
Kabul
Swat
Khyber Pass
Dir
Peshawar
Taxila
Gandhara
Baramula
Ushkur
Srinagar
Akhnur
KASHMIR
LADAKH
Chamba
HIMACHAL PRADESH
Lahore
PANJAB
Baluchistan
Jhelum
PAKISTAN
HARYANA
New Delhi
Ahichchhatra
Indus
Mathura
Jaipur
RAJASTHAN
Yamuna
UTTAR PRADESH
NEPAL
BHUTAN
Tibet
Ganges
Allahabad
Sarnath
Patna
Bhitari
Bodhgaya
Kurkihar
BIHAR
Tropic of Cancer
Dilwara
Deogarh
GUJARAT
Ujjain
Vindhya Range
Bhopal
MADHYA PRADESH
WEST BENGAL
Calcutta
Tamluk
Bhuvaneshwar
Puri
Ajanta
MAHARASHTRA
ORISSA
Bombay
INDIA
Arabian Sea
GOA
Krishna
ANDHRA PRADESH
Pattadakal
Tirupati
Bay of Bengal
Kanchipuram
Madras
Mamallapuram
KERALA
TAMIL NADU
Srirangam
Chidambaram
Madurai
Indian Ocean

# Preface and Acknowledgments

Of the nearly two hundred sculptures catalogued in this second volume of the catalogue raisonné of the museum's Indian sculpture collection, fifty-three were acquired from Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck in 1969. Before that date only two bronzes were in the collection. The additions since 1970 not only reflect the museum's aggressive acquisition program but also considerably strengthen the Heeramaneck group to form a remarkably extensive and varied collection of Indian sculpture.

While the works catalogued here do not represent all major styles of sculpture that fourished on the Indian subcontinent between 700 and 1800 (the period discussed), they do comprise one of the most comprehensive collections among American and European museums. While the Heeramaneck group included only stone and metal sculptures, the Los Angeles collection now contains ivory and wood objects as well. The Heeramaneck collection was particularly outstanding in sculptures from Kashmir, Rajasthan, central India, Bihar, and Bengal. Southern India was represented mostly by stone sculptures. Subsequent acquisitions have not only augmented works from these areas but have also included objects from Orissa and the Deccan. In addition the collection now encompasses outstanding examples of the much admired Chola bronzes of Tamil Nadu.

The catalogue continues the format of previous volumes with substantive entries and chapter introductions. There are several introductory essays, but the reader may also profit by consulting the first volume, published in 1986. As in the previous volumes, selected inscriptions are translated in the Appendix. To provide the context in which the sculptures originally were used, illustrations of temples are included in the essays.

The phenomenal growth of the collection in the last seventeen years would not have been possible without the encouragement and support of the trustees, the late Kenneth Donahue, director of the museum between 1966 and 1979, Dr. Earl A. Powell III, the present director, and many individual donors, whose generosity is much appreciated. Especially supportive have been trustees Mrs. Anna Bing Arnold and Mrs. Harry Lenart, former trustee Mrs. Joan Palevsky, and the late Hal B. Wallis and Harry Lenart. Others who must also be especially thanked are Neil Kreitman, Michael Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Edgar G. Richards, and Paul F. Walter and his family.

In preparing the catalogue I have benefited immensely from the observations and comments of many individuals, especially visiting colleagues, collectors, and dealers. It is a pleasure to acknowledge their contributions. Special mention should be made of Dr. Robert Brown of the University of California, Los Angeles, and Dr. Vidya Dehejia of Columbia University. For additional photographs used in the catalogue thanks are due to Dr. Robert E. Fisher of the University of Redlands; Dr. Donald M. Stadtner of the University of Texas, Austin; American Institute of Indian Studies, Ramnagar, Varanasi; and Archaeological Survey of India. I am especially pleased to acknowledge the cooperation of Dr. Gouriswar Bhattacharya of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, and Dr. U. P. Shah, former deputy director of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, in reading and translating many of the inscriptions included in the Appendix.

Almost every department in the museum offered me assistance in preparing this volume. Members of the Conservation Center diligently restored, tested, and cleaned many of the sculptures; the staff of the Art Research Library, especially Anne Diederick, cheerfully responded to numerous requests for interlibrary loans and verified bibliographical references; Steve Oliver of the Department of Photographic Services took special care to provide new photography for this volume; assistant registrar June Li carefully reviewed donor information; editor Kathleen Preciado, who also edited two previous volumes in this series, and managing editor Mitch Tuchman respectively edited and proofread the text; and the manuscript was typed with good humor and patience by secretary Nancy L. Carcione of the Publications Department. As with the two previous catalogues, this volume was attractively designed by Renée Cossutta and Judith Lausten.

Finally it is a great pleasure to thank Stephen Markel and Janice Leoshko, my colleagues in the Department of Indian and Southeast Asian Art, and the department's diligent volunteer, Ethel Heyer. Apart from their ungrudging cooperation, I have benefited immensely from the many suggestions and comments offered by them.

Pratapaditya Pal
*Senior Curator of Indian and Southeast Asian Art*

# General Introduction



*Precisely as love is reality experienced by the lover, and truth is reality as experienced by the philosopher, so beauty is reality as experienced by the artist: and these are three phases of the Absolute. But it is only through the objective work of art that the artist is able to communicate his experience, and for this purpose any theme proper to himself will serve, since the Absolute is manifested equally in the little and the great, animate and inanimate, good and evil.*

Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Siva,* 1924

# Historical Milieu

During the eleven centuries discussed in this catalogue, from about 700 to 1800, many dynasties and kingdoms flourished and disappeared, and any attempt at providing a historical survey is daunting. Relevant information is provided in each chapter introduction, while in this essay the cultural factors that are necessary for a proper understanding of the milieu in which the sculptures were produced is broadly delineated.

The Indian subcontinent is generally divided into three broad zones: northern India, the Deccan, and southern India. The Deccan and southern India comprise peninsular India, while the land mass spreading from the ocean in the west to Burma in the east and fringed in the north by the Himalayas and by the Vindhya, a mountain range separating it from the peninsula, is known as northern India. Thus the modern states of Maharashtra, Goa, Andhra Pradesh, and northern Karnataka comprise the Deccan (an Anglicization of the Sanskrit word *dakshiṇa,* meaning "south"), while southern Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala constitute the far south known also as Drāviḍadeśa, Dravidian Land.

Almost all the major languages and dialects in northern India, except for a small group spoken by certain tribes, are derived from Sanskrit. Through the thirteenth century, when much of northern India was overrun by Muslims entering from the northwestern passes between Afghanistan and Pakistan, Sanskrit remained the court language of northern India. From about the tenth century, however, the various spoken languages known earlier by the expression *Prākṛit* began to be formed, and by the fifteenth century most modern regional languages and dialects had evolved sufficiently to be distinguished from one another. With the emergence of these vernacular languages northern India became linguistically divided in much the same way as Europe.

In peninsular India only the language spoken in Maharashtra and known as Marathi is derived from Sanskrit. The other four languages, Telegu (Andhra Pradesh), Kannada (Karnataka), Tamil (Tamil Nadu), and Malayalam (Kerala), as well as several other dialects belong to the Dravidian linguistic family, which is linguistically distinct from the Sanskrit or Indo-European family of languages. Nevertheless because of the constant influx of peoples from the north into the south and ultimate dominance of Sanskritic religions and culture in the region, all Dravidian languages are heavily influenced by Sanskrit. Despite the

emergence of Dravidian linguistic fervor in the region, Sanskrit still remains the language of religion, and until the feudal states were merged into independent India Sanskrit was patronized and cultivated by the Hindu courts.

The predominant religion in India today is Hinduism, which began to assert itself by the sixth century. Buddhism, which had been a much more pervasive religious force across the subcontinent until 700, continued to lose ground thereafter and virtually disappeared from the land of its birth by the thirteenth century, except for the Chittagong hill tracts in southeast Bangladesh, Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu, and the Himalayan foothills. Literary and artistic evidence indicate that Buddhism was a flourishing religion in peninsular India at least through the eighth century, surviving thereafter in cities and small communities, perhaps as late as the twelfth century. At least one bronze in the collection [76] was dedicated around 900 in the Apanaka monastery at Kurkihar, near Bodhgaya, Bihar, by a monk from Kanchipuram (Coonjeevaram), Tamil Nadu. Indeed a large number of monks from the south seem to have migrated to the monasteries of Bihar between the ninth and eleventh centuries. While this may have been due to the renown of Bodhgaya, Kurkihar, Nalanda, and other monastic establishments of Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa, it may also have been due to the growing intolerance displayed by Hindus toward Buddhism. Hindus in India still proclaim how the great philosopher-saint Sankaracharya (active eighth century or earlier) dealt a crushing blow to the Buddhists and Jains. Jainism, the third Indian religion, also suffered from Hindu intolerance but has survived into modern times.

The eleven hundred years of Indian history discussed in this essay are divided into a few broad periods. Because of the strong ascendency of the Hindu religion and culture between 700 and 1200 in northern India the period is referred to as the Hindu period. The years between 1200 until 1800 are called the Muslim period. Since in the collection there are no sculptures from southern India dating to the eighth century and the Chola dynasty began to usurp political power from about the mid-ninth century and thereafter remained the dominant political force in the region until the mid-thirteenth century, the term *Chola period* is employed for the period 850 to 1279. Other contemporary dynasties, especially of Karnataka, such as the Chalukyas and Hoysalas, are mentioned in the chapter introductions. For southern India the years between 1375 and 1565 are known as the Vijaynagar period because of the predominance of the Vijaynagar kingdom in the region.

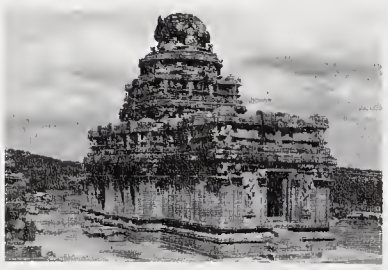
Neither racially nor culturally is the subcontinent homogeneous. Despite the derivation of northern languages from Sanskrit and the commonality of Hinduism among the vast majority of people from the north and south, there are enormous cultural differences among the various regions of the north and even more so between the north and the far south. For instance, although the same Hindu deities, such as Siva, Vishnu, the Great Goddess, and others are worshiped by Hindus all over the subcontinent, iconographic differences, as noted in the chapter introductions and catalogue entries, are significant. Or again, while the same basic style of temple architecture, known in Sanskrit texts by the expression *Nagara,* was employed across northern India, regional variations are numerous. An altogether different style, known as Dravida, prevailed in Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Architects in the southern-most state of Kerala, however, employed a different style, determined by their continued use of wood as the principal building material. The northern Nagara and southern Dravida styles in local variations or a combination of each are found in the Deccan.



A Nagara-style Siva temple, Damoh, Madhya Pradesh. c. 975. Photograph by Donald M. Stadtner.



A Nagara-style Siva temple, Muktesvar, Bhubaneswar, Orissa, ninth century. Photograph by the author.



A Dravida-style Siva temple, Narttamalai, Tamil Nadu, tenth century. Photograph by the author.

While the square plan is fundamental to all Indian temple architecture, the two basic styles—Nagara and Dravida—largely are distinguished by the shape and forms of the superstructure above the sanctum. In the Nagara style the ground plan usually is varied by adding graduated projections in the middle of each side, thereby creating a cruciform shape. This plan is continued in the superstructure, which is usually curvilinear and hence is known as a *śikhara*. The summit of the resulting tower is capped by a ribbed circular piece of stone, characterized as an *amalaka* (myrobolan fruit), an auspicious symbol. Because of the cruciform ground plan additional planes are created on the exterior, thereby increasing the space available for sculptural decoration. The amount of such sculptural decoration varies from one region to another. For instance, in central Indian temples at Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, and Mount Abu, Rajasthan, a profusion of sculptural decoration is apparent. By contrast, the Orissan architects were more restrained, and in the Himalayas a much simpler Nagara style was preferred.

In the Dravida style the outer walls of the structure are not projected but are divided into niches by pilasters. The superstructure, known as a *vimāna,* rises in a pyramidal arrangement, each story repeating the form of the lowermost story. The stages are distinguished by convex roll cornices with a horseshoe-shaped false window known as a chaitya-window motif. The summit of the superstructure is capped by a domical member, the *stūpi* or *stūpikā,* a miniature stupa. Sculptures generally are placed in niches on the external walls where they do not overwhelm the overall architectural design of the buildings.

The third style known in the texts as Veśara is a combination of the Nagara and Dravida styles, with the latter predominating. Architectural historians often refer to this style as the Chalukyan style as it developed fully under the Later Chalukyas, who were the dominant political force in the Deccan for more than two centuries, from about 975 to about 1189. Thereafter, in the territory of the erstwhile Mysore State, now part of Karnataka, this style reached its most florid expression during the rule of the Hoysala dynasty (c. 1110–1326). Indian temple architecture has always been preeminently sculptural in conception and execution but nowhere more so than in the Hoysala temples.

Of the eleven centuries of Indian history discussed in this volume the first half is of greater significance for sculpture. The period between 700 and 1300 witnessed an unprecedented growth in temple building. Most temples were stone, except in Kerala, at the southern tip of the country. In Bihar and Bengal, where brick continued to be the principal structural material, the temples were generally adorned with stone sculptures. Since the temples were profusely decorated with sculptures, the sculptors of this period must have been occupied constantly. Most sculptures catalogued here were made for Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain temples. Sculptures also must have embellished palaces and mansions, but while vast numbers of temples have survived, secular buildings from the Hindu period are conspicuously absent.

From the fifteenth century temple building appears to have slowed in northern India but continued unabated in the south. This is also reflected in the collection. There are more examples of post-fourteenth-century sculptures from the south than from the north. Sculptures from the south also reveal the use of a wider selection of material, including stone, metal, wood, and ivory. Much of northern



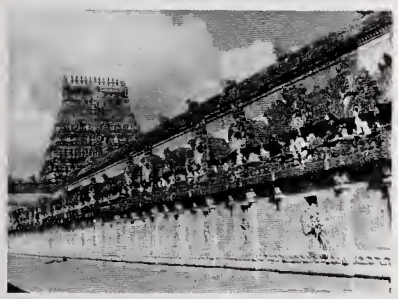
India was occupied by Muslim dynasties from the thirteenth century, which certainly dampened the urge among Hindus to build temples. Although in strongly Hindu kingdoms in Orissa, Rajasthan, and Gujarat as well as among the Jains building temples continued to be an act of piety, neither community seems to have been interested in architectural innovation. For the most part sculptural styles and iconographic programs established by the thirteenth century remained valid thereafter in the north and south. The architectural styles of the great Chola period continued to dominate the southern landscape long after the dynasty disappeared into history.[1]

Left:
*The God Vishnu* [14a]
Kashmir; c. 850
Brass inlaid with copper

Between 700 and 1300 Buddhism was still an important religion in certain regions. The most flourishing centers of the faith were Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal, and to a lesser extent Orissa. There were smaller enclaves of the faith in other parts of the country as well, but the Buddhist sculptures in the collection are from Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal, and Nagapattinam in the south.

Buddhist monasteries were easy targets of Muslim and other conquerors, and since monasteries played an essential role in the religion's growth and survival the destruction and abandonment of monasteries meant a quick demise of the faith. Jainism, however, like Hinduism, is less a congregational religion and thrives on personal devotion. While across northern India Jain temples located directly on the path of the advancing Muslims suffered, those situated in the more remote parts of Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Karnataka escaped destruction. Furthermore large numbers of Buddhists in Kashmir, Bihar, and Bengal converted to Islam, but the Jain religious establishments continued to thrive because of their affluent lay community. The Jains have always been enterprising traders, and while the Hindu community was recoiling within and becoming insular to safeguard itself from aggressive Islam, the Jains sailed to Africa and other lands without fear of losing their caste. The resulting prosperity assured the survival of their culture and religion.

By the year 700 the building and endowing of temples as well as the dedicating of images for worship became the prime religious objective of an Indian, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain. For Hindus in particular the building of a temple was the surest way to gain liberation (moksha) from the chain of rebirth. While only the very rich of all three communities could afford to build temples, those with some means were content to dedicate images in Hindu and Jain temples and Buddhist monasteries. The Hindus in northern India were especially prolific patrons between the seventh and thirteenth centuries, generally regarded as the golden period of Hindu architecture. In the south temples continued to be built up to the seventeenth century. Many temples, such as those at Chidambaram and Madurai, Tamil Nadu, were ancient foundations, and as living shrines they continued to grow into enormous complexes with successive courtyards dominated by ambitious gateways known as gopurams, which completely overwhelm the principal shrine. The largest temple proper (the building enclosing the shrine) was built by the Chola emperor Rajaraja I (r. 985–1018) in Tanjore, the ancient Chola capital. Known as Rājarājeśvara or Bṛihadīśvara, it is dedicated to Siva. No *vimana* is taller, but several later temples have gopurams that are more imposing.



The enclosure wall and gopuram of a Mahalinga temple, Tiruvadaimardur, Tamil Nadu, eleventh century. Photograph courtesy Archaeological Survey of India.

That building temples and consecrating images became the most important cultural activity in the life of a monarch, his courtiers, and the affluent merchants of the realm is evident from literary and archaeological sources. While most religious texts, such as the Hindu puranas (ancient sacred lore) extol temple building as the surest means of gaining moksha, even historical chronicles—few as they are—more often record the religious foundations of a king than his political achievements. To cite one example, the most detailed history of Kashmir was written by the historian Kalhana (active twelfth century). Known as the *Rājataraṅgiṇī,* or Chronicle of Kings, it records the ruling families' acts of piety more than their political or economic achievements. For some kings nothing else is mentioned. Surviving inscriptions on stone and copper plates generally are more concerned with building temples and with their endowment with land and properties than with battles or famines or other acts of state. Many contain eulogies of the rulers and make hyperbolic claims about their political and cultural accomplishments, but most such accounts are untrustworthy. What is dependable is the fact that a temple was established or endowed. There were numerous towns and cities all across India containing palaces and mansions that are enthusiastically described in contemporary literature. No matter which ancient capital one visits, whether Kanauj in Uttar Pradesh, Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, Bhubaneswar in Orissa, or Kanchipuram and Tanjore in Tamil Nadu, the material remains of their ancient glory are temples and more temples.

# Materials and Function

Most sculptures in the collection are in stone and metal with a few in ivory and wood. The function of the Orissan ivory [114] is not known, but that from Kashmir [8] and the Christian ivories from Goa [120–22] were votive objects intended for dedication at religious establishments or personal use. Of the five wood sculptures from Kerala, one [164] was used as a bracket figure to support a temple roof, a second [165] served as a headpiece used during a religious ceremony, a pair [167] was meant for a processional chariot, and a fifth piece [166] is a Christian sculpture that probably stood in a niche of a church.

In viewing Indian stone sculptures the casual viewer or art historian for that matter is seldom aware that the sculptors worked with a widely divergent material, which may well have influenced the style and quality of the sculptures. Often the quality of the stone determined the depth or intricacy of the carving. Harder stones allowed the sculptor to smother the form with a plethora of ornaments and details as in Bihar, Bengal, and Karnataka. In sculptures carved from softer stones, such as sandstone or the gneissic rock used in Orissa, the artist preferred to emphasize the form rather than minutiae. The wide variety of stone employed by Indian sculptors also resulted in sculptures with divergent surfaces for color as well as texture. Temples often were painted so that the sculptures looked quite different in situ.[2]



Wall section showing placement of temple figures, Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh, eleventh century. Photograph by Donald M. Stadtner.

Almost all the stone sculptures in the collection were made to be placed on the external walls of temples. That none was placed within a shrine as a principal or subsidiary image is evident from the fact that none shows a rubbed surface due to daily application of ritual unguents. The sculptures from Orissa and Tamil Nadu have more abraded surfaces than those from the north partly because of their proximity to the ocean. Because most sculptures were used on the external walls they are reliefs, although some are deeply carved. Their depth generally depended on their positions on the temple walls and depth of the niches in which they were placed. The style of the temple to which a particular relief belonged also contributed to its form and composition, while the theme was determined by the religious affiliation of the shrine. Stone sculpture in the round rarely is found in India. Even the images worshiped in the shrines are generally reliefs. The viewer of these reliefs, whether in a photograph or gallery, is not aware of their context, and to some extent the original intent of the sculpture is distorted. Few sculptures were seen at eye level as they are in museum galleries. Some, such as bracket figures [44, 128], would not only have been placed high above the viewer, but the sculptor must



have taken their angular positions into account while carving them. Seen today at eye level and on a pedestal, a relief may appear strange for one reason or another. In some instances perspective may appear faulty, in others details may seem not as carefully finished, and in still others the proportions of the limbs may seem unnatural and the turn of the heads or bodies awkward. All these apparent distortions, however, may have been deliberate and determined by the exact function and position of a relief in its architectural context. Thus while the content of the sculpture was determined by religious needs, the form was governed by its architectonic function.

Left:
*Siva's Family* [34]
Uttar Pradesh; tenth century
Sandstone

Most stone sculptures in the collection are from Hindu temples. Among the few Buddhist sculptures several are from Bihar and Bengal, and one each from the northwest and Tamil Nadu. The Jain sculptures are all from Rajasthan and Gujarat, where many Jain temples still survive. By and large the Hindus and Jains were much more prolific in the use of sculpture for embellishing their temples than were the Buddhists. Although few Buddhist temples of the period exist today—either in the north or south—the sculptural remains indicate that the repertoire for adorning a temple or monastery with sculpture, whether in stone or terra-cotta, was more limited and restrained than that used in Hindu or Jain temples. In Hindu and Jain temples, apart from images of gods and goddesses and mythological subjects, mundane themes and genres, albeit in thinly divine guise, as well as symbolic and decorative motifs and designs provided the sculptors with a repertoire of bewildering richness. All regional styles, however, do not reflect an equally strong penchant for figurative or ornamental decoration. In the north, for example, the temples of western and central India are far more lavish in their use of sculpture than, for example, those in Kashmir and Orissa. In the south Chalukya and Chola temples are distinguished by a harmonious balance and restraint in the use of sculptural embellishment. By contrast in the later schools under the Hoysala in Karnataka and Kākatiya (c. 1190–1320) dynasties in Andhra, both sculpture and exuberant ornamentation seem to have overwhelmed architecture. In designing the colossal gopurams for their temples after the fall of the Cholas, the south Indian architects too appear to have favored iconographic extravagance. While the gateways at Chidambaram or Madurai look impressive from a distance, a closer view is often architecturally disappointing.

Before the eighth century the Indian temple, whether Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, was a modest structure. Although Buddhist, as well as Jain, monasteries were large complexes and served as places of learning, by and large a temple was primarily meant as a place of worship. By the eleventh century, however, both Hindu and Jain temples not only expanded physically, becoming enormous conglomerations of several buildings, but they also grew into the major social and cultural centers in a given community, rural or urban. Still later in the south the important temples, such as Chidambaram and Madurai or Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, became veritable fortified towns. The temple increasingly became the focal point of public life, serving as the community's town hall, theater for dance and drama, and public art gallery. Hence nothing was excluded from the architect's repertoire, and the sculptor drew on all forms of human activities, both spiritual and mundane, to educate and delight his visitors. Since almost every activity of a Hindu or Jain has ritualistic importance, nothing is purely secular and hence could be shown on a temple without reservation. Thus apart from gods and goddesses and mythological themes, one finds a plethora of genres depicting dancers, musicians, battles, and frankly erotic subjects, even if they have symbolic and esoteric meaning not always understood by their viewers. The temple became a source for satisfying the spiritual urge of a devotee as well as a mirror of mundane experience. On the

outside the temple expresses the world of form, but inside, except for the symbol of divinity, the almost-empty main shrine emphasizes the formless. On the outside is the world of gods, humans, and animals, of individual souls in Vedantic terms, but inside is the domain of the Great Soul, often symbolized by a solitary icon.

By contrast the bronze sculptures in the collection served a wider variety of purposes. Some were used in domestic shrines as indicated by their effaced condition caused by daily ablutions [14, 90, 96]. Most are Hindu bronzes, although one or two Jain bronzes [60, 64] also reveal similar usage. Other Jain bronzes as well as most Buddhist bronzes were probably votive offerings in temples, where they may have adorned the altars without receiving direct worship. Buddhists appear to have dedicated bronzes to monasteries as acts of piety, as thanksgiving for the removal of an obstacle or success of an enterprise, whereupon the bronzes may have been simply put away in storage after their initial consecration. The larger south Indian bronzes were used as processional images. Generally they were kept in subsidiary shrines of a temple and taken out once a year during a religious festival and paraded around the ground. Whether in constant worship in a public or private shrine or occasionally used during festivals, the bronzes almost invariably were (and still are) wrapped in clothes so that one only caught a glimpse of their faces. Nevertheless the sculptors took great care to finish every detail, at least in the front, without which the image would be deemed incomplete. While in the north rarely was a bronze modeled or finished at the back, it is curious that the Chola bronzes almost invariably are. Why the Chola sculptors went to the trouble of executing their bronzes in the round when their backs were rarely viewed is a mystery unless, of course, their sense of orthodoxy led them to believe that the images would otherwise be incomplete and hence ritually unacceptable. Precisely because they are sculptures in the round, they appear more naturalistic and are particularly appealing to Western aesthetic sensibility.



Clothed image of Durgā in Sakti Devi temple, Chatrarhi, Himachal Pradesh, ninth century. Photograph courtesy the American Institute of Indian Studies, Ramnagar, Varanasi.

The word *bronze* is used here generically, for few Indian metal sculptures are made of bronze. Most Indian bronzes are made of different kinds of copper alloy and brass. Just as different stones were used in different regions so also there is a great variation in the alloy employed in the various parts of the country. Similarly just as the different stones contributed to differences in style and quality of carving so also the various alloys as well as casting techniques have exerted some influence on the finished products. In much of the central, northwestern, and western parts of the subcontinent brass appears to have been the principal medium used for casting metal images. In Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa copper alloy remained popular at least until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Thereafter brass became more common. The sculptors of Tamil Nadu generally preferred copper alloy, although brass appears to have been introduced after the sixteenth century. Copper alloy also remained the principal medium in other southern regions as well. While southern Indians rarely enriched the surfaces of their bronzes with inlay, the practice was much more common all over the north. Silver, copper, and a bituminous black substance were used to inlay the eyes, clothes, and pedestals or thrones. Semiprecious stones were sparingly used [83] and occasionally paint [86]. Kashmiri sculptors seem to have been especially fond of enriching the surfaces of their brass figures with inlay, one of the richest being a ninth-century Vishnu [14a]. The gilding of bronzes seems to have been less popular in India than in Nepal and Tibet. Buddhists and to a lesser degree Jains preferred gilded images; gilded Hindu statues are extremely rare. All bronzes in the collection were made by the ciré perdue, or lost wax, process. The collection fortunately contains a rare bronze from southern India [158] that evidently was discarded after casting. It is a good piece with which to study the ancient casting process.

# Artist and Patron

Because stone sculptures were integral parts of temples rather than independent entities or intended for personal use, they were rarely inscribed. If they bear inscriptions, they usually reveal the donors' names as do several Buddhist sculptures from Bihar [73, 75–76]. Sculptors' names rarely are included, although in several Hoysala temples sculptors seem to have been particularly eager to sign their works. Sculpture has been so abundantly employed in Hoysala temples that it would seem as if there were competitions among sculptors to display their virtuosity. The collection includes two inscribed sculptures with the names of the sculptors. The Sarasvati [63] was carved by Jagadeva, and the term used to describe him is *sūtradhāra* (literally, "the holder of string"), the common expression in Sanskrit for an architect. Mahipati, the sculptor of a bronze [62], is characterized as a *vijñānika,* "knowledgeable, or skillful, one."

An individual artist often worked in various media. It was not uncommon for a sculptor to be adept at carving stone, ivory, or wood and to model and cast bronze or to know how to paint or design a building. Often the cultured man or woman also learned the arts of painting and sculpture. Many monarchs were well known for their skill in sculpture, while others wrote important books about the theory and practice of the visual arts. Most professional artists belonged to guilds and were men, although female sculptors are not unknown. The profession usually was hereditary, and early and prolonged apprenticeship was preferred. After the fifteenth century the arts became gradually more segmented and artists became more specialized. From about the thirteenth century as society became more caste-ridden the various professions too came to denote subcastes closer to the bottom of the ladder than to the top. Before that, however, artists enjoyed a far more exalted social status, and it was not uncommon for a brahman or learned Buddhist monk to be an architect.

Although very little is known about individual artists, some were highly regarded. That their work was appreciated is abundantly clear from literature and inscriptions. Great artists who were retained by the courts appear to have enjoyed the same status as master musicians and dancers, as is known from such titles bestowed upon them as *chitrāchārya* or *śilpāchārya*. While *chitra* and *śilpa* mean "art," the suffix *āchārya* is an honorific reserved only for eminent teachers. Like their



Left:
*A Buddhist Altarpiece* [39]
Madhya Pradesh, Sirpur; c. 800
Bronze inlaid with silver and copper

royal employers, master sculptors too were given exalted titles (*viruda*) in inscriptions. The sculptors who left their names on Hoysala temples bore such exalted titles as "smiter of the crowd of titled sculptors," "champion over rival sculptors," or "tiger among sculptors." At least one instance has survived in ancient Bengal where Rāṇaka was not only regarded as the greatest among his contemporaries but was an important court official. Sculptors often doubled as scribes, being responsible for incising royal edicts on stone, and scribes held important positions at courts. Both before and after the commission the artists were honored with garlands, apparel, and beetlenut and sandalwood paste exactly as were poets and dance teachers. While money was the principal form of payment, some artists were rewarded with land.

It has been sometimes claimed that to be successful an artist had to be a yogi: "In fact, for painting or preparing sculptural forms of deities he had to reverently contemplate on their *dhyānaślokas* (descriptions of deities for meditation), sit in a lonely attitude of peace and tranquility facing east and produce the picture with great devotion."[3] While this may have been the ideal practice demanded by theologians, artists did nothing of the sort, as is clear not only from observation of today's artists but also from textual evidence. A study of the traditional marble sculptors of Jaipur, Rajasthan, reveals that "The master artisans are often Adi-Gaud Brahmins whereas many workers come from various castes of smiths, carpenters, potters, many farmer castes and Muslim groups."[4] The workshop produces both Hindu and Jain images, and it is unlikely that a Muslim sculptor would invoke the mental image of the deity before carving his piece. The authors of the Jaipur study further observe: "No ritual is performed nor any sacred treatment is given to the half-complete image in the workshop. A worker seated over the half-complete *jina* image and smoking and chatting is a common sight."[5]

Ancient literature also confirmed that the artists were neither yogis nor even particularly religious. The Kashmiri poet Kshemendra (active eleventh century) laments the moral degeneration of the artists, reprimanding them for being frequent visitors to the houses of prostitution and delighting in the company of courtesans. Curiously he also mentions how while courtesans entertained others for their wealth, they associated with artists for their own sake. It is not surprising that the artist and courtesan would enjoy each other's company, for not only were the courtesans skilled in the various visual arts but since an artist was expected to be familiar with dancing he had little choice but to visit a house of pleasure, since dancing was the prerogative of courtesans and temple girls. This close association between the artist and courtesan must account to some degree for the intimate knowledge of the female form and feminine moods and activities expressed by temple sculptors. Although the figures depict celestial rather than terrestrial females, that they are not simply figments of the artist's imagination is indicated by the incredible variety of their representations recording every romantic activity. The models for these celestials clearly were not the wives or female relatives of the artists.

That the artists used courtesans and other celebrities of their times as models is known from literature. A carved portrait of a girl plays an important part and provides the title of a romantic play called *Viddhaśālabhañjikā* by the famous poet Rājaśekhara (c. 875–950). Even though the statue was an idealized creation, the royal hero of the play had no difficulty in recognizing his beloved. In the monumental *Kathaśaritsāgara* (Ocean of stories) by the twelfth-century Kashmiri poet Somadeva, a sculptor visiting the capital of Orissa is so struck by the beauty of the kingdom's princess that he immediately uses her as a model to carve a statue, which is referred to by the author as a *śālabhañjikā,* a word commonly used by art historians to describe the figures of celestial nymphs on temple walls. This practice is not entirely unknown today, for it is not uncommon in Calcutta to encounter clay images modeled for seasonal festivals of Durga or Sarasvati that reveal features of film actresses and other local beauties even if the artists are not always conscious of the fact.

Whether the patron was Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain, a religious benefaction was considered to be the greatest act of piety. Men and women were equally generous. The building of a temple being a very costly affair, the patrons usually were kings, royal family members, or wealthy courtiers and merchants. The temple also had to be generously endowed. Although a vast number of records of the period have survived, they do not mention the involvement of the donor in the design of the building. Some eminent rulers, such as the Pallava king Mahendravarman I (active seventh century) of Kanchipuram or Bhoja of Dhara, Madhya Pradesh (r. 1018–60), who were themselves artists or well versed in aesthetic theory, may well have taken a keen interest in designing and building their temples. Apart from Mahendravarman and Bhoja, other monarchs of the period, including the Chalukya Somesvara III (r. 1126–38), who wrote important theoretical treatises on the arts, must have been personally involved with their architects and artists. Certainly the greatest Kashmiri ruler, Lalitaditya (r. c. 724–60), and his minister from central Asia, Chaṇkuna, seem to have been especially interested in the visual arts as is clear from Kalhana's history. Presumably the great tenth-century Chola queen, Sembiyan Mahadevi, among the most eminent and generous patrons of the period and donor of some of the greatest Chola bronzes, was as interested in the religious aspects of her benefactions as she was in their artistic merit.

A few documents fortunately have survived that reveal the donor's personal interest in his commission. The inscription on the base of the beautiful Sarasvati [63] states that it was commissioned by two merchants to replace an older statue that accidentally had been destroyed. The two donors must have been personally interested in this particular goddess, and perhaps at their request the figure was made to conform closely to the original. Contemporary inscriptions inform us that after his invasion of Kanchipuram, the early Western Chalukya king Vikramāditya II (r. 733–46) of the Deccan was so impressed with the city's temples that he not only prevented their destruction but endowed them further. One of these was the Kailaśanātha at Kanchipuram, built by the Pallava monarch Rajasiṁha (r. c. 700–728). A recent study has shown that the sculptural program of the peristyle surrounding the temple symbolizes the various titles of the monarch, who must have played a direct role in the structure's design.[6] From the inscriptions and designs of the eighth-century temples at Pattadakal, Karnataka, where the Western Chalukya kings were crowned and cremated, it may be surmised that architects and sculptors brought from the Pallava kingdom (c. 550–950) were responsible for the Chalukya royal shrines.

Among the great temple builders of India were two Jain brothers, Vastupala and Tejahpala, of Gujarat. They flourished in the first half of the thirteenth century and were rich bankers as well as influential ministers. Between them they built scores of temples and religious buildings in Gujarat and Rajasthan. One of the major temples built by Tejahpala and completed in 1231 is the Neminatha, or Luna Vasahi, on Mount Abu, Rajasthan.[7] The chief architect of the temple was Śobhanadeva, while his brother-in-law Udala kept the accounts. Udala repeatedly complained to Tejahpala about the unnecessary procrastination by the sculptors and their constant demand for payment in advance. One day Tejahpala and his wife, Anupama, who also was keenly interested in the building, visited the site and were concerned about the slow progress. Anupama asked the architect why the work was held up and was told that the sculptors and masons found it too cold in the mornings to work and took long breaks at midday as they had to return home for their lunch. Anupama then advised her husband to employ more craftsmen and provide them all with their midday meal. Tejahpala took the advice, and the work proceeded much faster. Not only does this episode demonstrate how the donors took personal interest in their commissions, but it also reveals that far from being yogis, Indian artists were no different from artists elsewhere in their mode of working.



# Themes and Variations

Left:
*A Jain Altarpiece* [60]
Gujarat, Broach; 988
Gilt copper inlaid with silver and semiprecious stone

Although Hinduism was the predominant religion on the subcontinent, Buddhism was still a strong presence until the thirteenth century. The third Indian religion, Jainism, survives to this day, although the number of adherents are about 2.6 million. Encountered all over the subcontinent, Jains are most prominent in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Karnataka. The fourth religious group represented by a few objects in the collection is Christianity, which, according to tradition, was introduced to the subcontinent by the Apostle Thomas but gained ground after the arrival of the Portuguese in the fifteenth century.

Literally millions of divinities and celestial beings as well as endless cycles of myths and legends provided the sculptors with themes for their temples and monasteries. Although a vast body of literature describing and discussing the iconography and myths have survived, it is not sufficient to explain the iconographic program or individual figures decorating religious edifices. While some sort of order and consistency is discernible among Buddhists and Jains, Hinduism's diversity is bewildering and awesome. Even among Buddhists and Jains, however, regional variations can be significant. For instance, stylistic and iconographic differences among three Buddha images from Kashmir [5], Bihar [70], and Tamil Nadu [140] are recognizable. Iconographic deviations also exist among representations of the same Buddhist deity because of doctrinal and ritualistic differences among Buddhists of the various regions. Similarly although the same gods and goddesses are worshiped by Hindus all over the subcontinent, the regional variations are often pronounced as may be gleaned by comparing three Vishnu images [14a–b, 100a–e, 137] or three Siva figures [20, 51, 129].

Siva and Vishnu became the two dominant figures among the Hindus by the eighth century and have remained so. The third figure of the Hindu trinity, Brahma, the creator god, has remained a relatively minor figure. While during the earlier period Siva and Vishnu coexisted amicably, their adherents—Saivas and Vaishnavas—especially in the south, increasingly became more sectarian, so that an ardent Vaishnava did not enter a Saiva shrine and vice versa. In south Indian temples representations of Siva's mount, the bull, or Vishnu's mount, Garuda, invariably are placed prominently on the surrounding walls so that visitors can determine the shrine's affiliation from a distance. The bull [136a] in the collection may have served such a purpose. A third deity that continued to gain prominence was the Great Goddess known commonly as Durga, the embodiment of sakti (cosmic

power). While the exclusive followers of Siva are known as Saivas (Saivite or Sivaite) and of Vishnu (including those who worship Krishna as a form of Vishnu) as Vaishnavas (Vaishnavite or Vishnuite), those who believe in the supremacy of the Great Goddess are referred to as Saktas. At the same time, however, some theologians, such as Sankaracharya, advocated a more tolerant attitude by insisting on the equality of Siva, Vishnu, Sakti, Surya, and Ganesa or Ganapati. The cult of Surya, the sun god, is a legacy of the ancient Vedic religion, but that of the elephant-headed Ganesa is more recent, having ascended during the Gupta period (320–600). Soon, however, Ganesa eclipsed Surya and as a remover of obstacles became a universally venerated deity not only among all Hindus but among Buddhists and Jains as well.

Two other divinities that have similarly remained popular among Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains are Lakshmi, or Sri-Lakshmi, goddess of wealth, and Sarasvati, patron deity of wisdom and learning. Although known by various names and in innumerable forms, the concept of the magna mater is pervasive among Hindus, and it also strongly influenced Buddhism and Jainism. Whatever the philosophies of Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain thinkers and theologians, for the common person the most important religious duty was to worship and propitiate the village deities, most of whom were feminine. Some were assimilated into the mainstream, but countless others survive in village and tribal India or are created anew to meet the fundamental needs of the individual for sustenance and to protect the family from disease, accidents, and evil influences.

Each morning the supplicant goes to the village shrine to catch a glimpse (*darśan*) of the deity, offer a little vermilion powder or a flower or two, and perhaps leave a little sweet so that the god or goddess does not grow hungry. At such shrines there are no intermediaries between the devotee and the deity. In more important temples, especially in major urban centers, this simple daily ritual is enacted with more pomp and ceremony as well as complexity, and a priest or monk—in the case of Buddhists—now serves as the intermediary. Only with Ganesa and other subsidiary deities whose shrines are open and accessible does the pious visitor directly communicate his or her devotion. He or she then circumambulates the temple, rarely noticing the numerous representations of gods and goddesses, of legends and didactic tales that adorn the temple walls. Groups of pilgrims, however, are taken around by the priests and guides, and the major deities are identified, some iconography explained, and local legends recounted. Most viewers are not interested in admiring the aesthetic merits of the sculptures or artistic skills of the unknown sculptors. Instead they are emotionally involved in "seeing" the image rather than responding to it as a work of art. The ordinary Buddhists and Jains also express their devotion in a similar manner, whether visiting a monastery or temple or worshiping at home.

Most sculptures in the collection depict a single deity or group in a strictly frontal composition. A stone sculpture generally is in the form of a stele, with the principal divinity dominating the composition, the acolytes being smaller. No matter what the medium the deities of all three religions usually stand or sit on a lotus, which is considered to be the symbol of the universe as well as of the devotee's heart. In many instances they are provided with elaborate thrones and like earthly rulers are lavishly adorned with diadems and jewelry. Compared with the sculptures made during the Gupta period, there is a stronger penchant for ornamentation,

although the degree of richness may vary from one region to another. Buddha and Jina figures generally are not given diadems or ornaments as befitting their roles as ascetic monks, although they sit on thrones. Images of the Buddha used in certain esoteric rites of initiation, however, are adorned. Similarly although Siva is considered to be the supreme ascetic and a wandering yogi, he too is richly adorned.

Apart from being beautifully attired and bejeweled, the gods and goddesses are almost always portrayed as youthful figures. The proportions and physiognomies of the figures noticeably differ from one region to another or from one age to another just as do the design of the ornaments. Although canons of proportions had to be followed implicitly, they differed in various areas. Despite the idealization the faces often reflect local ethnic features. While a strict frontality, certain formal dignity, and adherence to specified canons of proportions were the sine qua non for divine images, the sculptors were allowed greater freedom in the depiction of celestial females, who are shown in every conceivable posture and engaged in almost every possible mundane activity. At times their postures are so awkwardly contorted [57, 59] that it appears as if, tired with the limitations imposed by iconographic rules and prescriptions for making icons, the sculptor was deliberately displaying his mastery of the human body. In no other tradition has the sculptor indulged in such unabashed celebration of the female form, especially that of the dancer, with such freedom and delight as did the Indian sculptors between the eighth and fifteenth centuries.

Generally narrative scenes decorate the lower bands of the temple walls, usually no higher than eye level; only two friezes have entered the collection. One is a small, recessed panel depicting a group of musicians [53], the other is a unique representation of a Buddhist story [80]. Some stelae have a narrative content, such as images depicting the struggle between Durga and Mahishasura, the buffalo (*mahisha*) demon [50], sleeping Vishnu [36], Gauri's self-mortification [32] and Parvati's marriage with Siva [33], and Vishnu destroying the demons Madhu and Kaitabha [10]. Like the Pala-period jataka relief, this Vaishnava icon is an extremely rare representation. In all such examples the sculptors have encapsulated an entire myth by representing the essence of the story in an iconic, but animated composition. Other such instances of "action icons" are those portraying avatars of Vishnu [160] or Siva myths, where Siva destroys the forces of evil. A rare and charming representation of a Saiva myth is a relief depicting a cow adoring a Sivalinga [135].

Some popular iconic types are infused with a certain amount of action, although they do not always encapsulate a story. One such is the Saiva family group. In an Uttar Pradesh relief [34] Siva and his wife, Parvati, are ostensibly watching the dance of their favorite attendant. In a Madhya Pradesh version [51] the boy still dances, but the divine couple are immersed in each other. In Bihar and Bengal [79] the dancing boy is eliminated and they are engaged in expressing their love for one another. In the Deccan and the south the representations are more formal and hieratic [129, 143]. Sculptors in the central region of the subcontinent seem also to have been fond of depicting the Mother Goddesses in a more animated fashion than elsewhere [38]. They further infused their river goddess reliefs [45–46, 48], a pair representing the rivers Ganga and Yamuna being an invariable presence at the entrance to every Hindu temple, with a narrative intent by portraying the goddess with an entourage as if she were a queen going to a river to bathe. Among Buddhists the only iconic type in which narration is symbolically implied are those that depict the important events or miracles from the life of the historical



Buddha Sakyamuni. For instance, in a Pala-period image [75] the presence of the bodhi tree above and the gesture of his right hand indicate that the scene represents the Buddha's enlightenment at Bodhgaya. In other such sculptures the inclusion of Mara, god of desire, and the earth goddess who witnessed Buddha's conquest of Mara makes the narrative intent even more explicit. Buddhist icons are often animated by the lively or militant postures of the deities [91], or they may reflect sectarian bias when, for instance, a Buddhist god tramples a Hindu divinity [16].

Except for Buddhas (Buddha Sakyamuni, the future Buddha Maitreya, and several transcendental Buddhas of the Mahayana and Vajrayana pantheons) and Jinas (Jains recognize twenty-four such Jinas), the gods and goddesses of both religions are usually distinguished from celestial beings and mortals by multiple limbs. The most common practice is to show them with four arms, signifying the four directions and thereby emphasizing their cosmic nature. Sometimes they are given three or more heads but rarely two, although the preferred mode is to multiply the arms rather than the heads or legs. In her role as the destroyer of the buffalo demon Durga usually is shown with eight arms, but her ten-armed form ultimately became the standard in many parts of the subcontinent. While most gods and goddesses attending the superior Jinas in a Jain icon have four arms, Vajrayana Buddhists seem to have been particularly fond of divinities with six or more arms, multiple heads, and even more than two legs. Partly due to the increasingly assertive influence of Hinduism and the similar modes of rituals and worship that came to dominate all three religious systems after the eighth century, there was much mutual assimilation and borrowing among the three religions at this time. Except for minor iconographic variations, the same aesthetic norms were employed to depict the deities of the different religions, and often the same artists worked for patrons of all three faiths. Even today in Jaipur, Rajasthan, marble statues for Jain shrines are carved by Muslim sculptors, thereby demonstrating that the artist's professional life was not unduly affected by his personal beliefs.

Left:
*The Goddess Sarasvati* [63]
By Jagadeva
Gujarat; 1156
Marble

Another noteworthy feature of the religious art of each major faith during this period is the variations in the iconographic traditions from one region to another and even between one period and another. It will not be possible to record all such iconographic mutations and deviations that obviously record differing theological and societal needs, but they do have important art-historical bearings. Stylistic changes in Indian sculpture were slow and not easily discernible; iconographic differences can be important clues for regional and chronological attributions. For instance, within Hinduism broad differences exist between the northern and southern traditions. The ancient religious lore contained in the body of literature known as purana is accepted in both regions, but in terms of specific liturgy, rituals, and iconography the two traditions significantly differ. Such literature in the north is known as tantra, and in the south as agama. From about the seventh century, especially among the Tamils, the Saiva and Vaishnava religions have been heavily influenced by devout poets, who are regarded as saints [151, 156–57] as well as divine beings. Not only do their songs play an important role in temple liturgy, but images of their idealized portraits add a dimension to the art of Tamil Nadu and neighboring regions that is absent in the north. Although there are instances of assimilation of such devotional poems into temple liturgy in the north, a noticeable example being that of the *Gitagovinda,* or Song of the Cowherd God, by

Jayadeva (active twelfth century) sung daily at the temple of Jagannath at Puri, Orissa, the poet himself was not regarded as a saint, nor was his image incorporated in the pantheon as with the Tamil *nayamnārs* (Saiva saints) and *alvars* (Vaishnava saints). It is not possible to cite all such differences, and one or two other examples must suffice.

Although Siva is generally worshiped by his symbol known as the linga all over the subcontinent, iconographic variations from one region to another, both for the overall temple programs and content of individual iconic types, are conspicuous. For instance, not only does one find regional variations among the Saiva family group images in the north and the Deccan, but it is less familiar in Tamil Nadu. The southern version is known as Somaskanda [143] and is seen more commonly in metal examples from the Chola period and later. In the earlier Pallava period in every Saiva shrine, however, the icon was an integral part of the inner sanctum, affixed to the wall behind the linga. The later abandonment of this practice is yet to be explained.

A second instance is that of Vrishavahana Siva, a common theme in the south, where the god is shown standing against his bull [148]. This particular iconographic type appears to have been invented in the northwestern part of the subcontinent during the Kushan period (first–third centuries). It was a very popular device on Kushan coins. Thereafter it is encountered occasionally in the art of the region, especially in Kashmir, but became popular in Tamil Nadu during the Pallava period. One can probably trace the migration of this image type from the northwest to the Pallava country in the seventh century, but somehow it did not travel east along the river Ganga. The story of iconographic migrations in India is a fascinating tale that remains to be fully unfolded, and it may provide interesting information about patterns of cultural diffusion.[8] Some historians believe that the Pallavas migrated to Tamil Nadu from the northwest. Could the Vrishavahana Siva image vestigially carry memories of such a migration?

A theme popular in the north and south is that of the dancing Siva. He is known in the north as Narteśvara or Nṛityeśvara and in Tamil Nadu as Nataraja, although all three expressions mean "Lord of the dance." In most such images in the north [40, 99] as well as the Deccan he is shown with four or more arms dancing in the posture known as *lalita* (grace). While in the north-central region and in Orissa he dances on the ground, in Bihar and Bengal he dances on the back of his bull, who looks up at his master in admiration. Only from Bengal have bronze images of this theme survived, indicating that this form of dancing Siva was also used in personal shrines. One such small bronze was, in fact, carried back to Tamil Nadu by the Chola king Rajendra I (r. 1012–44) after his northeastern expedition.[9]

The sculptors of Tamil Nadu invented a totally different image of dancing Siva, probably during the Pallava period [138]. This particular aspect of Siva was adopted by the Chola royal family as their patron deity. While the linga is the principal icon in all Saiva shrines, only in the Chidambaram temple, the royal chapel of the Cholas, the main image is that of Nataraja. Unlike those in the north and the Deccan, the image is used as an integral part of the iconographic program of every Siva temple and bronze versions are worshiped within the temple as well as carried in religious processions. Elsewhere the image simply depicts Siva as lord of the dance, in the south it is a symbol of Siva as the supreme being who performs all cosmic activities.[10] Curiously despite its importance in the religious life of Tamil Nadu and among the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the image was not adopted with equal fervor by other southern Hindus.

Major iconographic differences among regions may also be noted among images of Vishnu. For instance, the most popular Vishnu image in Kashmir depicts the god with four heads, two personified emblems at his side, and the earth goddess between his feet. Although the image type appears in fifth-century or earlier Mathura, Uttar Pradesh, it became more elaborate in Kashmir. By the eleventh century, when a temple to this form of Vishnu was erected in Khajuraho, the icon was referred to as the "Himalayan" type. This type rarely is encountered elsewhere. In Bihar and Bengal Vishnu invariably is accompanied by Sri-Lakshmi and Sarasvati [100a, c–e]. Sri-Lakshmi has been associated with Vishnu from ancient times, but Sarasvati became his second spouse only in eastern India not much earlier than the tenth century. Elsewhere in India Sarasvati generally is regarded as the wife of Brahma. In the south, however, Vishnu's spouses are Sri-Devi or Sri-Lakshmi, and Bhudevi, the earth goddess [153], who stands between Vishnu's feet in Kashmiri images. In the south Vishnu's Garuda seems not to have been as necessary as Siva's bull and Durga's lion.

The avatars of Vishnu, especially Krishna, were universally popular, although the avatar cult was more prevalent in the north than in the south. Here again the type of Krishna image known as Rajamannar (Lord of the cowherds), of which the collection has an outstanding bronze group [147], was unique to Tamil Nadu. The cult of the baby Krishna, floating on a banyan leaf in the cosmic ocean, crawling, or as the butter thief [159a–b], appears to have been more popular in Tamil Nadu than elsewhere. The images usually are small bronzes intended for domestic shrines. They must also have been popular with pilgrims and taken back to other regions. The impressive Orissan bronze [116] very likely was inspired by an earlier representation from Tamil Nadu. The form of the sleeping Vishnu [36, 132], known in the north as Narayana, although a familiar theme in Vaishnava art, was far more important in the south. Known as Ranganatha, he is often the principal icon in Vaishnava temples in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Even the city where the most important Vaishnava shrine of Tamil Nadu is located is known after him as Srirangam.



Goddess Durga on the wall of a Siva temple, Takkolam, Tamil Nadu, ninth century. Photograph courtesy the American Institute of Indian Studies, Ramnagar, Varanasi.

Similarly there are noteworthy iconographic differences among the goddesses, even though the same manifestations are universally venerated. The goddess Durga is generally represented as engaged in killing Mahishasura as he emerges from the buffalo's neck [50]. In Tamil Nadu, however, she simply stands gracefully on the severed head of a buffalo, and the lion is rarely included. Kali or Chamunda, the goddess symbolizing both death and liberation, is an emaciated and terrifying creature in most regions except Tamil Nadu, where, but for her discreet fangs, she is a beautiful lady [141]. The group of Seven or Eight Mother Goddesses, known collectively as Sapta- or Ashta-matrikas, are rarely represented as dancing in the far south as they are frequently in the north [38]. When accompanying their spouses, the goddesses in Tamil Nadu are given disarmingly simple iconographic features, making a precise identification difficult. Only subtle differences of proportions and postures distinguish the two spouses of Vishnu [153]. The Chola-period sculpture of a goddess in the collection could be either Sita, spouse of the god Rama, an avatar of Vishnu, or Rukmini, Krishna's principal wife [144]. In the complete Rajamannar group [147] the two women are distinguished by their hairstyles and by a breastband for Rukmini. Had they been separated from the group, Satyabhama could easily have been identified either as Parvati, Siva's spouse, or as Vishnu's Bhudevi. In east Indian Vishnu images Sri-Lakshmi always carries the lotus and Sarasvati the vina, a musical instrument, thus making their identification



somewhat simpler. The west Indian Jain Sarasvati [63], however, is given different emblems from the usual vina-carrying Sarasvati of eastern India; her principal identifying feature remains the gander, borrowed from Brahma.

Separated from their contexts, it is often difficult to identify Jain goddesses. Apart from the Sarasvati, such figures as the celestial females [57–58] or Hoysala Kubera [127] could well have adorned a Hindu or Jain shrine. Sometimes, however, the figure of a small Jina is added above the central figure as in the bronze Ambika from the Deccan [126], making its religious affiliation obvious. Without such signs it is difficult to distinguish Buddhist deities as well. The Samvara [16] basically borrows Siva's iconography, but the tiny image of a Buddha in his crown establishes his Buddhist association. In other instances, such as the Bihari Tara [73] or Bengali Sri-Devi [92], the presence of Buddha effigies or inscriptions are essential for their precise identification. Apart from Buddha images, effigies of monks, donative inscriptions, and other inscriptions stating the Buddhist creed are essential for identifying Buddhist images. The creed is as follows:

Left:
*A Celestial Cymbalist* [128]
Karnataka, Dharawar District; c. 1100
Schist (metasiltstone)

*Of all the things springing from a cause*
*The cause has been shown by the Tathagata {Thus-came-Buddha}*
*And their cessation too*
*The Great Pilgrim has deciphered.*

It is often inscribed in the front of stone and bronze images and may also be incised on the back or bottom of bronzes.

Like Hindu deities, Buddhist gods and goddesses are multilimbed and carry a number of weapons and implements symbolizing their natures or powers. While the major Hindu deities have animals, which serve as vehicles of transportation, Buddhist divinities, with the exception of the five transcendental Buddhas of the Vajrayana pantheon, rarely have such animal cognizants. These animal emblems of the Buddhas are not always depicted, and they are not used as vehicles as with Hindu deities. Each of the twenty-four Jinas also has such emblems, which are essential to their identification, for with one or two exceptions, such as Parsvanatha (distinguished by a snakehood) and Rishabhanatha (distinguished by his long, loose hair), all Jinas are identical. While the five transcendental Buddhas and Buddha Sakyamuni usually can be differentiated by their gestures and emblems, Jinas are represented only in two postures. Either they stand erect with their unusually long arms hanging by their sides and extending to the knees in a posture known as *kāyotosarga* (offering the body), characteristic only of Jinas, [62] or they are seated in meditation with their hands on their laps. A Buddha may stand erect or in déhachement or sit in the meditating posture like a Jina or with legs hanging from the seat, known as *bhadrasana* (auspicious posture), or *pralambapadasana* (legs-extended posture). Only in the death scene of Buddha Sakyamuni is he shown in a recumbent posture. The hairstyle of the Buddhas and Jinas is similar, consisting of small curls, but usually the Buddhas are distinguished by a cranial bump signifying their supernatural wisdom while Jinas have the mark of an auspicious jewel on their chests similar to that of the Hindu Vishnu. While the Buddhas are always fully clothed in the three robes of a monk, a Jina can be either clothed or naked. A clothed Jina indicates that the image is of Śvetāmbara Jain persuasion, whereas those who worship naked Jinas are known as Digambaras (sky clad).

# The Pantheons

## Hindu

The major Hindu deities represented in the collection are Siva, Vishnu, Surya, Kumara, Ganesa, the Great Goddess, Durga, the river goddesses Ganga and Yamuna, and the snake goddess Manasa. Together with Brahma, Siva and Vishnu constitute a triad in the Hindu pantheon. While Brahma has remained a figurehead in Hindu mythology, Siva and Vishnu, the destroyer and preserver of the universe respectively, are the two principal divinities. As in classical mythology Hindu gods have their spouses and families and their favorite animals, which serve as their mounts. Each deity also has numerous manifestations, emanations, and incarnations. Those incarnations for Vishnu are specifically called avatars.

Siva is worshiped principally in a symbol know as a linga, which literally means "sign" or "gender." A Sivalinga [135] therefore is basically an abstract symbol signifying both the deity's phallus and therefore his progenitive powers as well as the cosmic pillar connecting the heaven and earth. Thus although regarded as the cosmic destroyer, Siva is also a creator god and like Vishnu has his salvific aspect. To their devotees every major Hindu deity simultaneously creates, preserves, and destroys. Siva is recognized by his third eye, erect penis signifying yogic self-control (this element is never shown in south Indian images of the god), trident emblem (represented only in the north and Deccan), and a bull. In his two most popular representations he is shown in a family group and as the Lord of the Dance, symbolizing his cosmic aspect. In his awesome manifestation he is known as Bhairava or Mahakala when the dog becomes his animal mount.

Vishnu is a regal figure distinguished by a tall crown, *srivatsa* (auspicious mark) on his chest, and *vanamālā* (garland of wild flowers). In performing his duties as preserver of the cosmic order, he rides Garuda, a half-human, half-avian creature [23]. Vishnu's principal attributes are the conch, wheel, club, and lotus, although the latter is not always depicted. While this is the god's principal form, he has many avatars, although only ten of them became popular. The collection contains the avatar known as Varaha (Boar), the appearance Vishnu once assumed to save the earth [160]. The most popular form of Vishnu is known as Krishna, who may have been a historical figure and after his deification came to be identified with Vishnu. While Vishnu's complexion is fair, Krishna, whose name means "black," is dark. Krishna is a complex personality, but the aspect that strongly appealed to his devotees is that of a pastoral god who looks after his bovine herd and charms the female cowherds with his melodious flute. As lord of the

cowherds Krishna is depicted in a characteristically Tamil icon [147], and in a small Kerala bronze we encounter him as the charming flute player [163]. The collection also includes several representations of the infant Krishna.

An ancient Hindu god, Surya is generally represented as a regal figure like Vishnu but usually with two arms [47]. The lotus is his distinctive emblem, which he holds with both hands. He is further distinguished only in northern India by his jacket or coat of mail, trousers, and boots, generally the attire of the inhabitants of northwestern India and central Asia. In the south like most other gods depicted in Indian art he wears only a dhoti and his feet are unshod [131]. His Vedic past is expressed by the fact that he is the only Hindu god who rides a chariot rather than a single animal [19]. The chariot is drawn by seven horses symbolizing the rays of the sun. The close conceptual and iconographic relationship of the Hindu Surya and Apollo, the classical sun god, is obvious.

A second solar deity represented in the collection is Revanta who first appears in Indian art and literature during the Gupta period [97]. Regarded as one of Surya's sons, Revanta may have been an adaptation of an Iranian motif. He is portrayed riding a horse as he returns from a hunt. Although not represented in the collection by any major example, the group of nine deities known in Sanskrit as the Navagraha comprise nine planets including the sun and Rahu, the demon that causes eclipses, and Ketu, the comet. These deities are extremely popular among Indians, whether Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain, and are constantly and universally venerated. They are worshiped in all temples and are recalled in every religious performance. They appear in the collection in a relief of the sleeping Vishnu [36] and again in a Jaina altarpiece [60]. While the Navagrahas do not figure prominently in the collection, representations of the sun god are remarkably varied and include some rare examples, such as his four-armed manifestations from the northwest [2, 19].

As with Navagraha, the elephant-headed Ganesa is also universally venerated. Every Hindu temple has a shrine dedicated to the deity, and he is also worshiped in almost every home. Regarded as the remover of obstacles, Ganesa is a portly figure distinguished by his elephant head. His distinctive attributes are his broken tusk, which he uses as a weapon or writing implement, and bowl of sweets, of which he is inordinately fond. The rat is his usual mount, but he is also depicted seated on the lion. Ganesa is considered to be a son of Siva and Parvati, their other son being Kumara, who is also known as Skanda or Karttikeya. The collection includes a number of interesting images of the deity showing him seated, standing, and dancing. His dance is that of a playful child rather than the cosmic dance of his father [134].

Kumara is represented independently only in one sculpture in the collection [158], but he is frequently represented with his parents and Ganesa. An ancient god of war, Kumara combines several other concepts, such as a protector of children, presiding god of thieves, and deity of wisdom. His independent cult seems to have diminished in importance in northern India after the eighth century, but in Tamil Nadu, because of his identification with a local deity called Murugan, he has retained his popularity.

The collection is particularly rich in forms of goddesses. Like the gods, there are different goddesses for different occasions; Hindus believe, however, that the gods are all manifestations of the Great Goddess, the source of sakti, or energy. She is at once a benevolent and ruthless destroyer of evil. Each god has a spouse who embodies a portion of the primal energy. By himself the god is powerless



without his consort's energy, an essential concept of Samkhya philosophy. Samkhya proposes a dualistic theory whereby the male principle, Purusha, is considered to be an inert spectator of the cosmic process that operates through the female principle, Prakriti, symbolizing energy.

Siva's spouse is Parvati, also known as Gauri, Devi, or Uma; the river goddess Ganga is considered to be a second wife. Parvati does not appear to be a separate goddess as is Sri-Lakshmi, who, apart from being Vishnu's spouse, is the ancient goddess of wealth and prosperity. Sarasvati is also an ancient deity and has an independent cult of her own. She began her career as a river goddess, became the spouse of Brahma, from whom she borrowed her mount, the gander [63], and finally was transferred to Vishnu in the eastern region of the subcontinent. Like Sri-Lakshmi, Ganesa, and the Navagraha, as the goddess of wisdom Sarasvati is universally venerated by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains. In the south Vishnu's second spouse is the earth goddess Bhudevi.

Left:
*Siva as Lord of the Dance* [138a]
Tamil Nadu; c. 950
Copper alloy

The most common and important embodiment of cosmic power or energy is the great goddess known as Durga, who is represented in the collection by several examples. While most other divinities, whether male or female, are worshiped in what may be termed nonnarrative images, Durga is a warrior goddess who frequently is depicted in a tableau in which she is shown engorging the demon Mahishasura, who assumed the form of a buffalo to elude her. The only other such "violent" icon with narrative intent and worshiped directly is that of Narasimha, the man-lion avatar of Vishnu. This demon-destroying goddess image appears to have been invented in the first century as an independent warrior goddess, who in course of time became identified with Parvati. Similarly Kali or Chamunda, a counterpart of Siva's awesome form known as Bhairava or Mahakala, is a combination of various goddesses of dread who also came to be regarded as manifestations of the Great Goddess. She is one of a group of seven or eight goddesses known collectively as the Sapta- or Ashta-matrikas. Although addressed as mothers, with the exception of Kali, they are really the personified energy or power of the important Hindu gods and hence borrow their emblems. They too are universally adored by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains.

Finally a goddess whose cult was especially popular in eastern India was Manasa [77]. She was perhaps a local snake goddess who was accepted in the pantheon as a powerful antidote to the harsh realities of deadly snake poison and ultimately was regarded as an incarnation of the Great Goddess. She too was worshiped in Bihar and Bengal by both Hindus and Buddhists, although the latter had another goddess, called Mahamayuri, who saved people from the adder's bite. The continued importance of the snake in Indian religion as a symbol of fertility is demonstrated by a ninth-century Deccani relief [124] as well as by its presence in other images [30, 60]. In village India the cult of the snake deities is still a flourishing religious phenomenon. Likewise another survival of an ancient form of animal worship is that of the monkey-god Hanuman, represented in the collection by three examples. In the epic *Ramayana* (parts of which date to the sixth century B.C.), Hanuman is a devout follower and general of the hero Rama, who is regarded by the Vaishnavas as an avatar of Vishnu. In the other epic, the *Mahabharata* (completed in its present form by the fourth century), Hanuman's divine status is well established. Thereafter he is represented in art as a mount of Rama, but he also increasingly became the focus of a separate cult after the seventh century. While originally he may have been worshiped as a heroic deity by the warrior class, today he is a popular god all over India and is comparable with Ganesa.

# Buddhist

The founder of Buddhism, Buddha Sakyamuni (c. 563–483 B.C.) figures prominently in Buddhist art represented in the collection from Kashmir, Bihar, Bengal, and Tamil Nadu. The image of the Buddha rather than representations of his jatakas, or stories of his past lives, has remained popular, whether for worship or didactic purposes. By the eighth century Buddhism had undergone profound changes and assumed three major forms: Sravakayana, Mahayana, and Vajrayana. Sravakayana, the Path of the Listeners, known today by the Pali term *Theravada,* Doctrine of Elders, is of little interest for the Buddhist art discussed here.

Mahayana, Great Path, which evolved around the birth of Christ, profoundly influenced Buddhist art as it encouraged personal faith and popularized the fundamental concept of a bodhisattva. The term *bodhisattva* generally describes a being who has all the qualifications of attaining Buddhahood but does not enter into the state so that he can remain to help the less fortunate. This concept and the idea of transcendental Buddhas theoretically opened the way for the creation of numerous Buddhas and bodhisattvas. In addition to personal ethical and moral exhortations, one could attain enlightenment (bodhi) or nirvana, the goal of every Buddhist, through faith and devotion to the bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteshvara, Maitreya (who is also the future Buddha), Manjusri, and Vajrapani became veritable gods who could help devotees attain material and spiritual riches and save their bodies as well as their souls. Thus the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Faxian (Fa-hsien) who visited India around 400 records how on his return sea voyage during a severe storm he was saved because he prayed to Avalokiteshvara. Like Hindus and Jains, Buddhists began to worship in a similar fashion images of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvahood was not confined to males, and already by the seventh century Mahayana Buddhism introduced the idea of the Goddess Tara (literally, "one who saves"), who became a female counterpart of Avalokiteshvara. The pantheon gradually swelled with the inclusion of many local divinities, conversion of the tutelary and protective village and tribal gods and semidivine beings of much earlier times known as yakshas and yakshis, prophylactic deities, who are often personifications of dhāraṇī (charms) designed to ward off evil influences, avert natural calamities, and cure diseases, and even deification of important philosophical treatises, the most notable being the *Prajnaparamita,* which embodies the fundamental philosophy of Mahayana Buddhism. The expression *Prajnaparamita* literally means "the wisdom or knowledge (*prajna*) that leads to the other shore (*paramita*)." Prajnaparamita also became the leading Buddhist goddess, and all others came to be regarded her emanation.

The idea of *prajna* was further developed in the third form of Buddhism known as Vajrayana, Diamond or Adamantine Path. Adopting complicated and esoteric rituals and sophisticated yogic practices, combined with mystical visions, followers of Vajrayana Buddhism evolved a religion that produced a pantheon and iconography no less complex than that of the Hindus. The basic theory, however, is quite simple. Images of gods and goddesses, it is said, are necessary for ordinary people at the lowest stage of praxis but are dispensed with as the practitioner progresses. Enlightenment in Vajrayana is regarded as the removal of ignorance, which can be achieved by seeing the clear light, which is *prajna*. The means of achievement is *karuna* (compassion). All gods symbolize compassion and all goddesses *prajna,* and the spontaneous state of the nonduality of these two

concepts is enlightenment. Thus whether the image represents a bodhisattva or an esoteric deity, such as Samvara or Heruka, it symbolizes compassion, whereas all goddesses, such as Tara, Chunda, or Kurukulla, represent wisdom. At the same time, however, some deities have particular functions. For instance, Kurukulla is regarded as the goddess of love. Marichi is the Buddhist counterpart of Surya, and Vasudhara (bestower of wealth) plays the same role among Vajrayana Buddhists as the Hindu Sri-Lakshmi.

Like the Hindu deities the Buddhist divinities too have placid and angry forms. Apart from being eternally youthful, they are also represented either as princely figures or ascetics or a combination of both. Curiously bodhisattvas often wear around their body the sacred cord, which is among Hindus an indication of the higher castes. Buddhism does not believe in the caste system. Like their Hindu counterparts, Buddhist deities also hold in their hands various emblems, many of which are shared by the gods of all three faiths. The symbolic significance of these attributes, however, differ. The three most popular emblems among Buddhist deities are the lotus, both the pink and blue varieties, thunderbolt, and book. Of the three, the lotus is a universal metaphor for purity in the Indian tradition. The thunderbolt in the context of Vajrayana Buddhism symbolizes the faith itself, while the book signifies wisdom.

## Jain

The Jain faith derives its name from the expression *jina,* meaning "conqueror." The Jains believe in the historicity of twenty-four enlightened teachers, or Jinas, some being older than the Buddha. The twenty-fourth Jina, Mahavira (lifedates unknown), was certainly a historical person and elder contemporary of the Buddha. Like that of the Buddhists, the Jain philosophy denies the existence of God but believes in the use of images for worship similar to the Hindus and Buddhists.

The primary focus of their devotion are twenty-four Jinas, among whom Parsvanatha and Mahavira are the most popular. The gods and goddesses comprising the Jain pantheon are all attendants of the Jinas and usually play a subservient role. Many Jain deities were ancient yakshas and yakshis worshiped in villages and towns. From about the birth of Christ all three religions reached into the ancient pool of popular beliefs on the subcontinent and incorporated local deities into the pantheons. Some figures are common to all three religions, others are thinly disguised and may differ from one another in external form but are conceptually identical. Unlike the Buddhist and Hindu pantheon, that of the Jains does not include any terrifying or angry deities. The Jain gods have no destructive aspect since cruelty and killing are anathema to their beliefs.

The two most interesting figures of the Jain pantheon in the collection are Ambika [126] and Sarasvati [63]. While most Jain gods and goddesses play a secondary role either as attendants or as guardians, these two emerged as the foci of individual cults. Ambika literally means "mother," and hence she is a Mother Goddess. The word *Ambika* is also a common epithet of the Hindu Parvati and Uma. Except for the presence of the tiny image of the Jina in the bronze sculpture, the figures may easily be mistaken for Parvati and Kumara. The Jain Ambika even has the lion as her animal mount. She has remained a popular household deity of fertility and abundance among the lay community of Jains.



The popularity of Sarasvati, especially among Jain monks, is also readily apprehensible. The Jain community has always laid great stress on learning and books, and a well-stocked library is an essential component of a Jain religious establishment. This emphasis among the Jains on knowledge is further evident from the fact that they believed in a group of sixteen goddesses of learning known as Vidyādevi. Sarasvati is only one of the sixteen but the most preeminent.

Left:
Krishna and Satyabhama [147]
Tamil Nadu; twelfth century
Copper alloy

## Christian

Books on Indian art generally ignore the art produced by the Christian communities of India, even though there are probably more Christians on the subcontinent today than there are Jains. Tradition traces the origins of Christianity in India to the Apostle Thomas. The few Christian objects in the collection, however, belong to the seventeenth or eighteenth century. One of these is a pietà [166] carved in wood from a Christian church in Kerala, where the predominant form of Christianity is described as Syro-Malabar. As is evident from the designation, this church was influenced largely by Syrian Christianity. The pietà, however, reflects European influence, perhaps of the Portuguese or Spanish schools.

The remaining images are all carved from ivory [120–23]. Generally all such Christian ivories emerging from India are given a Goanese provenance. This, however, is by no means certain, for ivory is a popular medium in much of southern India. The literature discussing the Christian art of India unfortunately is extremely scanty, and no attempt has yet been made to differentiate among regional styles.

As the administrative center of Portuguese interests in India and further east from about 1500, Goa has remained a bastion of Roman Catholicism in Asia. Goa's fame in the Christian world is also partly due to the city's association with Saint Francis Xavier (1506–52). In religious matters Goa generally has remained faithful to Portugal, and during the Portuguese occupation was known as the second Lisbon. The Christian art of Goa therefore strongly imitates whatever Portuguese models were brought from the mother country as is demonstrated by the two small statues of the Virgin [121–22] and a processional image of Christ [123]. At the same time, however, some details, as discussed in the entries, may reflect Indian iconographic concepts.

## Notes

1. For a lucid overview of Indian art see Craven 1976. Other general sutveys are Coomaraswamy [1927] 1985; Huntington & Huntington 1985; Harle 1986. For a history of sculpture between 700 and 1300 see Lippe 1978.

2. For a technical study of the variety of stones employed for Indian sculpture see Newman 1984.

3. C. Sivaramamurti, *The Painter in Ancient India* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1978), p. 25. In general this book is a good reference for artists of ancient India.

4. Fischer & Jain 1977, p. 13.

5. Ibid., pp. 13–14.

6. Nagaswamy 1988.

7. C. Sivaramamurti, *Sources of History Illuminated by Literature* (New Delhi: Kanak, 1979), pp. 132–33. Much of the information about the artist and patron is derived from this book or Sivaramamurti, *Painter in Ancient India*.

8. Migration patterns in India are discussed in C. Sivaramamurti, *Royal Conquests and Cultural Migrations in South India and the Deccan* (Calcutta: Indian Museum, 1955).

9. Sivaramamurti 1979, fig. 33.

10. For a comprehensive study of the Nataraja theme in Indian civilization see Sivaramamurti 1974. Very interesting information about the cult of Nataraja is provided in R. Nagaswamy, "Nataraja and the Urdhva Saivas," in *Kusumāñjali: New Interpretation of Indian Art and Culture*, ed. M. S. Nagaraja Rao, vol. 1 (Delhi: Agam Kala Prakashan, 1987).

# The Northwest



# Introduction

Before the seventh century the most active center of art in the northwestern region of the subcontinent was the area known as Gandhara, comprising southern Afghanistan and northern Pakistan. Straddling the northern border of the subcontinent, Gandhara was a frontier region inhabited by people of diverse races and cultures. The predominant religion of the area appears to have been Buddhism. Most surviving monuments and sculptures produced during the first seven centuries of the Christian era were created for the glorification of the Buddhist faith. To suit the varied tastes of their polyglot society Gandharan artists created a highly synthetic artistic style dominated by classical elements.

By the fourth century Kashmir had acquired a reputation as a leading center of learning. Scanty archaeological evidence notwithstanding, it may be surmised from literary sources that Hinduism and Buddhism flourished in Kashmir when Gandhara was largely under Buddhist influence. Not only had Buddhist monks from Kashmir visited China and Southeast Asia by the eighth century, but from the early fifth century almost all Chinese pilgrims included Kashmir in their Indian itinerary. During the seventh century Tibetans turned to Kashmir when they sought to adopt the Buddhist religion and a script. Thereafter for generations of Tibetans, especially those living in western Tibet, Kashmir remained a principal source of Buddhism and its art until the valley's conversion to Islam. In the tenth century, when Buddhism was revived in western Tibet, once again Tibetans visited Kashmir to return home with not only books and teachers but also artists to design and decorate the new monasteries. The surviving artistic evidence in Himachal Pradesh, immediately to the southeast of the valley, also demonstrates that Kashmir was an inspiring artistic source from about the seventh century.

By the eighth century the state of Kashmir emerged as the principal political and cultural power in the region. Thereafter, until Kashmir was Islamicized in the fourteenth century, while not always exercising political hegemony, it remained the most influential cultural center not only for the northwest but also for Tibet, China, and much of northern India. Whereas earlier religious ideas and artistic norms had traveled from Gandhara mostly north into Central Asia and China, between the eighth and fourteenth centuries Kashmir became the primary source in the region for the dissemination of religious, intellectual, and artistic ideas far beyond the confines of this small, but idyllic valley.



Ruins of a temple, Martand, Kashmir, eighth century. Photograph by Robert E. Fisher.

Although the history of Hinduism in Kashmir can be traced to earlier times, the religion became more important from about the seventh century. The significance of Kashmir's contribution to the development of Hinduism can be gauged from the fact that an entire school of Saivism has come to be designated as Kashmiri. From the eighth until the thirteenth century Kashmir produced scores of poets and pundits who not only contributed significantly to Hindu religion and philosophy but also to theories of rhetoric and poetics as well as to Sanskrit literature in general.[1] During this period Kashmir and the adjoining Swat Valley now in Pakistan, known as Uddiyana, were important centers for the theory and practice of tantric beliefs, which were adopted with equal zeal by Hindus and Buddhists.



A sculpture in a niche, Martand, Kashmir, eighth century. Photograph by Robert E. Fisher.

Like its poets and philosophers, the artists of Kashmir played a fundamental role in disseminating aesthetic ideas far beyond the boundaries of their valley. While through the seventh century Kashmir remained largely dependent on Gandhara for its artistic norms, from the eighth century not only did Kashmiri artists evolve a recognizably distinct style but also influenced the arts of their neighbors. After the eighth century the Turki Sahi rulers of Kabul in Afghanistan and then the Hindu Sahis of southern Afghanistan and Panjab established close political and cultural ties with the Kashmiri royal families. The most important nobles at the Kashmiri court were the Sahis. Apart from imbibing Kashmiri religious and literary ideas, these regions were strongly affected by Kashmiri artistic ideas as well. Similarly in the district of Chamba, Himachal Pradesh, and in western Tibet, including Ladakh, the predominant artistic influence was Kashmiri until the fourteenth century.

With few exceptions most sculptures from the northwest in the museum's collection are from Kashmir. One exception is an intriguing marble sculpture of about the eighth or ninth century representing a Buddha [4]. The sculpture is attributed to Afghanistan largely because most significant marble sculptures have so far been discovered in Afghanistan and none in Kashmir. A few small marble sculptures have been found in Pakistan, but very likely they were imported from Afghanistan. Whatever its provenance, stylistically the sculpture is more closely related to Kashmiri Buddha images than to figures found in Afghanistan. The work may have been made by a Kashmiri sculptor working in Afghanistan or a local sculptor who closely followed a Kashmiri model. This attribution compellingly demonstrates the extent of Kashmiri influence.

Between the eighth and fourteenth centuries an enormous number of religious shrines, Hindu and Buddhist, was built as well as destroyed in Kashmir. Stone was the principal architectural medium, and although few temples and monasteries have survived, those that have clearly reveal the distinctive architectural style of the valley. The dependence on Gandharan prototypes incorporating classical elements is obvious. Because of the widespread destruction of temples only a limited quantity of stone sculptures has survived. The museum's collection contains less than a dozen examples, but they are of interest for their thematic and stylistic variations.



A Siva temple, Pandrethan, Kashmir, eighth century. Photograph by Robert E. Fisher.

Kashmir also appears to have been an important center of ivory carving. Although the surviving number of objects, mostly preserved in Tibetan monasteries, is not large, they demonstrate the Kashmiri artist's extraordinary dexterity in this medium. While a great amount of ivory, found in Begram in Afghanistan and Taxila in Pakistan, dates at least to the Kushan period if not earlier, the Kashmiri ivories generally are from the eighth to tenth centuries. Included in the collection is a fine, but fragmentary Kashmiri piece depicting a group of

celestial attendants [8]. Stylistically this exquisitely carved object belongs to a group that is considered to belong to the eighth century, a particularly productive period for Kashmiri art.

Most Kashmiri and Himalayan sculptures in the collection are cast in metal. Until the fourteenth century Kashmir was as important and prolific a center of bronze casting as were Bihar and Tamil Nadu. Whereas Tamil Nadu bronzes have a high copper content, Kashmiri artists preferred to work in brass, which was more popular during the period in western and central India than in the south. Most Kashmiri bronzes in the collection have a pale yellow surface, often enriched by silver and occasionally copper inlay. Such inlaying, although also practiced in Sind in Pakistan and Gujarat in India, seems to have been a specialization of Kashmiri artists, who may have introduced the technique to Afghanistan and the Islamic world in the west after the eleventh century.[2] The ninth-century brass Vishnu [14a], richly inlaid with silver and copper, is perhaps the most resplendent surviving example of such bronzes from Kashmir.

According to Kalhana's history, Hindu temples and Buddhist monasteries in Kashmir were once filled with large metal images. With regard to the munificence of Lalitaditya, Kalhana wrote:

> *Into the image of* Muktakeśava *{Vishnu} he put eighty-four thousand Tolakas {modern tola equal to 11.7 grams} of gold.*
>
> *And collecting as many thousands of Palas {four tolakas} of silver, that pure-minded {king} made the famous {statue of}* Parihasakeśava *{Vishnu}.*
>
> *With just as many thousands of Prasthas {equal to sixteen pala} of copper he made the glorious {statue of} the "Great Buddha"* (Bṛhadbuddha) *which reached up to the sky.*[3]

Chinese sources and surviving large bronzes in the Kashmiri style preserved in Chamba confirm the reliability of Kalhana's account.[4]

While no gold or silver sculptures have survived, during the last three decades an enormous quantity of brass and copper images have emerged from Tibetan monasteries. As Tibet is a predominantly Buddhist country, most bronzes represent Buddhist deities. Fewer Hindu bronzes have survived, and most examples in the collection are Buddhist. Nevertheless the few Hindu bronzes in the collection, including the magnificent Vishnu [14a], comprise a fascinating group with some rare iconographic representations. It is not easy, however, to distinguish among bronzes created during the period in Kashmir, Pakistan, Afghanistan, or Chamba.[5] Smaller bronzes attributed to Kashmir may have been produced in nearby areas.

The religious sculptures of Kashmir and the contiguous region are characterized by iconographic and stylistic features distinct from the artistic traditions of the Indian plains. Several iconic types favored in the northwest are rarely encountered in other parts of the subcontinent. For example, to my knowledge nowhere else on the subcontinent does one find an icon representing the Hindu god Vishnu killing the demons Madhu and Kaitabha [10]. The most common Kashmiri Vishnu image, known as Chaturānana or Vaikuṇṭha, shows the deity with four heads [14a–b, 23]. Although this iconic type was familiar in the earlier art of Mathura, it remained extremely popular in Kashmir and is rarely encountered elsewhere. Moreover Kashmiri artists continued to represent two of Vishnu's attributes—the club and wheel—in anthropomorphic form long after the Gupta period, when this mode of personifying the emblems was popular across

northern India. The practice of adding the figure of the earth goddess Prithivi between Vishnu's feet is almost exclusive to northwestern Vishnu images [14a] and may have been borrowed from Central Asia.[6] Further only in Vishnu images from this region is the lotus prominently displayed on the halo above the god's head as well as the short sword tucked into his sash [14b].[7]

A short sword hanging in front is also a distinctive feature of Kashmiri images of the Hindu sun god Surya [2, 19], which differ considerably from the representations of this god elsewhere. This placement of the sword may incorporate a local princely custom.[8] Kashmiri-style Surya figures are also given four arms as well as a garland and lion standard as emblems in addition to two lotuses. Like Vishnu, Surya is shown resting his hands on the heads of his attendant figures.

In Kashmiri images the Hindu god Siva frequently is given three heads [20], probably in keeping with the multiheaded Vishnu images.[9] One of the three heads is awesome, like Vishnu's rear visage, representing Bhairava, angry aspect of Siva, while a second is that of a female. Ganesa is shown seated on two lions rather than his usual rat mount [22a–b]. This seems to have been a peculiarity of Ganesa images in Kashmir and Chamba. Although not represented in the collection, in Kashmir the lion further appears as a mount of the god of wealth, Kubera or Vaisravana, as well as of a syncretic goddess combining Sri-Lakshmi, and Anāhitā, Iranian deity of fertility.[10] Siva is often shown with his bull, but Vishnu's Garuda is depicted only when the god is shown riding the mount [23] and not in standing images [10, 14a–b, 27].

In contrast to the Hindu bronzes the Buddhist bronzes in the collection reveal fewer iconographic variations from forms represented in other contemporary centers of Buddhist art, particularly Bihar and Bengal. The most impressive Buddhist bronze in the collection is an eighth-century preaching Buddha seated on a throne [9]. The throne with lions and a seated yaksha is typical of a Kashmiri design popular in stone monuments of the period and is not known to occur elsewhere. More importantly this particular image type was much copied in Tibet and probably represents a portable version of an earlier sacrosanct icon in the valley.

The collection includes a rare bronze representation of an infant Buddha [11]. The first such independent icon of a baby Buddha in an Indian style, it is an object of considerable cultural significance. While the cult of the infant Buddha is still strong in Japan, this bronze offers the first artistic evidence that the cult may also have been prevalent in Kashmir. A unique Buddhist image in the collection depicts the esoteric deity Samvara [16]. In iconography and style this remarkably attractive bronze differs significantly from east Indian and Nepali versions of this figure. Especially noteworthy is the idiosyncratic delineation of the rocky base, unique to Kashmir. Equally rare and iconographically distinctive is an image of the Buddhist goddess Kurukulla [25]. Whether the bronze was produced in Kashmir or western Tibet, it is an attractive example of a Kashmiri-style female and is of imposing size among bronzes from this region.

Apart from rendering the rocky terrain in a highly stylized and architectonic fashion, Kashmiri artists also represented the lotus in a distinctive manner. Continuing the earlier Gandharan tradition, they preferred to render the flower's petals like artichoke leaves [5, 12–13]. A second floral type shows the petals divided into two swelling lobes known as "the double stamenodia" [2, 17, 25]. This type too seems to have originated in Gandhara but may have entered

Kashmir around the ninth century from central Asia. The use of the artichokelike lotus curiously seems to have been confined largely to Buddhist figures. Often in such socles, where the petals are shown in two rows, the lower is broader and the constricted middle of the lotus base gives it an hourglass shape. This too is characteristic only of Kashmiri and Swat-style bronzes. The double-stamenodia base, however, is common to Hindu and Buddhist sculptures in bronze and stone.

Among other distinctive features are the diadem with three circular or triangular lobes. In Chamba the triangular form seems to have been preferred. The design of the diadem with three circular lobes occurs much earlier in China, in the fifth-century bodhisattvas carved from rock in Yungang, Shanxi Province. Considering Kashmir's political, cultural, and commercial relations with Central Asia and China, such artistic exchanges are not surprising.

Apart from differences in attire, adornments, lotus and pedestal forms, the most distinctive stylistic feature of Kashmiri-style sculpture is in the modeling of the figure. By and large Kashmiri sculptors continued the more naturalistic modeling prevalent in earlier Gandharan sculptures. Often the male figures reveal a rather heavy form with the pectoral and abdominal muscles prominently delineated. Kashmiri sculptors seem also to have preferred round, almost bloated faces for their figures, especially after the eighth century. In many instances the cheeks bulge out considerably, and the nose, arms, and legs are rounded and fleshy. Female figures frequently are distinguished by short, tailored blouses that emphasize the swelling curves of the breasts [11a, 24]. They also wear substantial scarves. These garments are encountered only in female figures from the northwest. Their faces are also fleshy and fully rounded.

Kashmiri sculptors generally seem to have eschewed the earlier Gandharan penchant for depicting draperies with heavy, voluminous folds. Rather like the rest of India they simplified the dhoti, suggesting its appearance with spare and delicate outlines. This becomes clear by comparing a seventh-century bodhisattva figure echoing the Gandharan style [1] and later figures [8, 18]. In early Buddha images the modified Gupta-period garment style of Mathura, with their symmetrical and stylized folds, seems to have been more popular than the Gandharan style, with its more plastic and voluminous treatment of the robes. Some sculptors also preferred the more abstracted, idealized figural form of Gupta India rather than the naturalism of Gandhara. The surfaces of stone sculptures generally are less detailed than those of the bronzes, for which silver and copper inlaying of the eyes, lips, and garments creates a richer effect, although this technique was also employed elsewhere on the subcontinent.

Of the four sculptures attributed here to Himachal Pradesh a stone Vishnu is the earliest [27], but its provenance is uncertain. It is certainly an early sculpture, and if it is from Chamba it may be the stylistic forebear of better-known colossal Vishnu images still in worship in temples at Chamba.[11] The plaquelike processional image [29] can be attributed to eastern Himachal Pradesh for only in that region are such images still used on special religious festivals. The five-headed linga cover [30], although a late sculpture, is a striking object of unusual iconography and elegance.

## Notes

1. Those interested in reading further about Kashmir's history and culture may consult Ray 1970 and Stein [1900] 1979.

2. See Pal 1975c for a more detailed analysis of Kashmiri bronzes.

3. Stein [1900] 1979, 1: 142.

4. See Pal 1975c; Schroeder 1982.

5. A recent study undertaken by Chandra Reedy of the University of California, Los Angeles, at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art has made it possible to distinguish the bronzes produced in this region (see Reedy 1986).

6. In the art of Central Asia the figure of the earth goddess is seen between the feet of the god Vaisravana, who was the focus of a royal cult especially in Khotan (see P. Granoff, "Tobatsu Bishamon: Three Japanese Statues in the United States and an Outline of the Rise of This Cult in East Asia," *East and West* 20 [1969]: 144–67). The goddess appears between Vishnu's feet already by the sixth century as in a bronze now in Berlin (Pal 1975c, p. 9).

7. This sword generally is seen in ninth-century Vishnu images and is prescribed only in the *Jayākhya Saṁhitā,* a Vaishnava text written in Kashmir.

8. Other figures occasionally wear a short dagger hanging horizontally in front. That this may have been a local affectation may be inferred from a passage in Kalhana's history that relates how Lalitaditya commanded the Turki Sahis to carry their arms at the back (Stein [1900] 1979, 1: 138).

9. Siva is represented with multiple heads on a linga, and when he is shown in the company of his spouse as in this Kashmiri representation he very rarely has multiple heads.

10. See Pal 1986, p. 228, and P. Pal, "Dhanada-Kubera of the *Vishṇudharmottara Purāṇa* and Some Images from North-West India," *Lalit Kalā* 18: 13–26.

11. Pal 1975c, pp. 216–17.

1 *The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara*
Pakistan or Kashmir; seventh century
Potstone; 8 in (20.3 cm)
Given anonymously
M.86.247.1



Completely flat at the back, this small image of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara may have been part of a larger group flanking a central figure of the Buddha. His diademed head rests against a plain halo, and he wears a dhoti and shawl. His right hand is raised in *abhayamudra* (gesture of reassurance), and his left hand, now broken, once held a lotus flower resting against the halo.

The figural type clearly is derived from Gandharan bodhisattva images. The naturalistic modeling and careful delineation of the drapery folds and volumes are distinct legacies of the earlier tradition. The garments, however, lack the naturalism and clarity of Gandharan bodhisattvas, and the folds are much simplified and stylized. The diadem is of a different design and is similar to those seen on Kashmiri figures of the eighth or ninth century [12]. The simpler ornaments are also unlike the luxurious adornments of Gandharan bodhisattvas and probably derive from Gupta-period sculptures.

Several similar small sculptures, made from gray potstone and mostly representing Hindu gods, have been recovered near ancient Taxila in Pakistan. These sculptures may have been made in sixth-century Kashmir and transported to the northwest (P. G. Paul 1986, pp. 119–31). Paul asserts that the distinctive stone of these small sculptures, markedly different from the material used by Gandharan sculptors, was quarried in Kashmir and that their style and carving technique points to a Kashmiri provenance and sixth-century date. Although Paul's arguments are persuasive, a Gandharan provenance cannot entirely be dismissed because several figures representing this distinctive style have been found in Pakistan.



2 *The God Surya*
Afghanistan or Kashmir; eighth century
Bronze inlaid with silver; 4 1/16 in (10.3 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.84.223.2

Three figures are represented on a molded base. The larger central figure stands upright, his two dwarf attendants posed in emphatic contrapposto. They look up at the sun god, whose Sanskrit name is Surya.

Characteristic of north Indian Surya figures, the god wears a long coat and boots. A tasseled cape drapes his upper torso. He also wears a long garland, sword in back, and small sword in front, which hangs horizontally across his thighs. Two of his four arms are broken. (In another Surya image [19] the god holds lotus flowers, his distinctive attribute.) Surya rests two hands on the nimbi and heads of his attendants and holds a garland or wreath on the right and a standard on the left. The capital of the standard, unclear in this example, must be a couchant lion as in the more complete tenth-century bronze in the collection. A plain nimbus sets off the head, and the eyes are inlaid with silver. The attendants are Piṅgala and Daṇḍī, or Kuṇḍī, who are also dressed like their master but whose attributes are now unrecognizable.



Four-armed Surya figures are rare in Indian art and iconographic literature, but the type was known in the northwestern region [6, 28]. Although this bronze is said to have been found in Afghanistan, it could have been made locally or imported from Kashmir. A four-armed Surya is described in the *Vishṇudharmottara-purāṇa,* considered to have been compiled in Kashmir during the fourth to seventh centuries. Interestingly the text states that a standard bearing a lion banner should be placed near the god. In these bronzes the standard obviously has become an attribute in the god's hands. The text further informs us that two of the god's hands should be placed on the heads of his attendants.

Apart from its close correspondence to a seventh-century text, there are other reasons for suggesting an eighth-century date. Stylistically it certainly predates the mid-ninth-century Vishnu [14a]. The squat proportions, shoulder cape, tiara design are other details that point to an eighth-century date. The design of the ribbons of the tiara is seen more often in sculptures in Afghanistan rather than Kashmir (see Kuwayama 1976). The short dagger in front also reflects an adaptation from Sahi martial attire. The Kashmiri monarch Lalitaditya forbade the Turki Sahis to wear their daggers in the front.



*3 The Goddess Durga*
Pakistan, Swat; eighth century
Bronze with patina; 5½ in (13.9 cm)
Gift of Spink and Sons, Ltd.
M.85.373



The goddess Durga is shown destroying the demon known as Mahishasura. During their encounter the demon assumed several disguises to elude the goddess, one of which was that of a buffalo. The goddess, however, decapitated the buffalo, and as the demon emerged from the animal's neck she killed him with her trident.

Several interesting features make this an unusual representation. The goddess usually engages the demon in a strident, standing position. Here, however, she is seated. The severed head of the buffalo lies on the shallow socle. From his neck emerges the tiny figure of a demon brandishing a club. The goddess seems to be pulling him out as she drives the tridenr into the animal's back. In her upper hands she holds a sword and cup. A coiled object, perhaps a snake, adorns her right ear, and a floral ornamenr graces her left ear. The two side lobes of her tiara are of the familiar Kashmiri variety, a crescent parrially enclosing a flower, perhaps the lotus; the central lobe is oval. The vertical third eye is prominently indicated on her forehead, and the hair is tied in a single braid in an unusual manner.

The bronze very likely was made in the Swat Valley sometime in the eighth century. Close comparisons are provided by images of a Buddha and Tara attributed to the Swat Valley (Schroeder 1982, pp. 90–91, nos. 9a, 9f). The findspot of the Buddha, now in a private collection, New York, is not known, but the Tara was retrieved from rhe North-West Frontier Province of British India (now Pakistan), and is in the British Museum, London. The Durga stylistically is closely akin to the Buddha, especially in the shape and features of the face. Both have similarly prominent noses. The figure's rather abstract modeling and small, shallow breasts are similar to that seen in the British Museum Tara. While the London Tara wears a jacket, the torso of the Los Angeles goddess is naked. The New York Buddha has been dated to the eighth century, while the London Tara was probably made in the ninrh.

The depiction of a seated Durga destroying the demon is unusual for north Indian art, but occurs in southern India. The earliest example is a seventh-century relief in the Shore temple at Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu (Tartakov & Dehejia 1984, fig. 53). The form of the seat, however, is not clear in this rather abraded relief. During the Chola period it was not uncommon to represent the goddess destroying the demon while seared on a rectangular seat (Sivaramamurti 1963, pl. 50). In most other ways, including the composition and her uncommon posture with the left leg hanging over the side of the rectangular seat and the right leg pressing down on the hindquarters of the buffalo, rhe Swat bronze remains a unique representation of the theme.

*4 The Buddha Sakyamuni*
Afghanistan (?); eighth–ninth century
Marble; 17¼ in (43.8 cm)
Given anonymously
M.78.135
Literature: Klimberg-Salter 1982, p. 94, pl. 8; Pal 1983, p. 55, fig. 10.

This rare marble Buddha is said to have emerged from Afghanistan, where marble was a popular sculptural material. Unlike most such sculptures, however, this example does not seem to have been polished.

The meditating Buddha seated on a lotus very likely represents Buddha Sakyamuni. His right hand forms the gesture of reassurance, and his left hand, placed on his knee, holds the end of his upper garment. Characteristic of the Buddha and as a mark of his divinity, he has elongated earlobes, short curly hair, and the cranial bump symbolizing wisdom. An aureole surrounds his body, and a halo encircles his head. An unusual iconographic peculiarity is the manner in which his legs are placed. Generally in Indian Buddhas [see 5, 9] the left leg is on the inside, but here the position is reversed.

This unusual feature is one of the peculiarities that makes it difficult to determine the exact provenance of this sculpture. The placement of the legs appears to have been more popular from the fifth century in China than in India. The design of the nimbus and aureole is also uncommon and not encountered in images from Afghanistan or Pakistan. The physiognomy, proportions, and modeling relate the figure closely to Kashmiri sculptures. Unusual also is the treatment of the neck folds, which are not incised but given substantial volume so that they look like braces or neckbands. The boldly delineated garment folds, which create a rippling effect, are common to Buddha images from Kashmir and Afghanistan and are given an individual expression in this figure. The symmetrical arrangement of the garment folds falling in undulating loops on the figure's chest is another interesting variation.

Thus although the figure was recovered from Afghanistan and is made of marble, a Kashmiri provenance cannot be ruled out altogether. The presence of iconographic and stylistic elements from China and Afghanistan complicate the attribution of this enigmatic work. The location of Afghanistan makes it a likely region in which all these different traditions could have intermingled.



5 *The Buddha Sakyamuni*
Kashmir; c. 700
Brass with color and inlaid with silver;
3¾ in (8.5 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.74.5.1
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 65, no. 52; Pal 1975c, pp. 88–89; Snellgrove 1978, fig. 260; Schroeder 1982, pp. 88–89, no. 8b.



Seated in meditation on a lotus base, the Buddha extends his right arm in *varadamudra* (gesture of charity); his left fist, suspended above the knee, is partly closed. The ends of the robe along his wrist and palm are faintly indicated. His small curls and cranial bump have been rubbed smooth, but traces of black paint still adhere to the surface. His eyes are inlaid with silver.

Although the bronze has been attributed to the Swat Valley by Schroeder (1982), by an examination of the object's style and material the likely place of origin is Kashmir (Reedy 1986, p. 387, fig. 48). Such sculptures, with their artichokelike lotuses, naturalistically modeled bodies, and realistic garments, reflect Kashmir's strong dependence on the earlier Gandharan school of sculpture.



6 *A Solar Deity*
Kashmir; c. 700
Stone; 4½ in (11.4 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.85.289.1

A four-armed, bearded god sits upright with his legs bent on a throne supported by a pair of lions. He is dressed in *udīchyaveśa* (northern attire), with coat and boots. He wears a necklace, ear ornaments, which may be of the variety known as *kuṇḍala* (pot shaped), and trilobed tiara. His lower-right hand is broken at the elbow. The attribute held in his lower-left hand is completely effaced, but the outline of the fist is recognizable. The emblems in the upper-right hand cannot be identified.

An exact identification of the deity is difficult to determine. The northern attire and position of the legs and of the two lower arms would indicate a solar deity. The attributes in the two upper hands, however, differ from those encountered in other sun god representations [2, 28]. The bearded face was not unusual for Surya images of the Gupta period (P. G. Paul 1986, fig. 53). The posture too is derived from Gupta-period Surya representations, where he is sometimes shown seated on a shallow throne with two lions (Pal 1978b, p. 59). Thus, although the emblems cannot be identified, the figure very likely represents Surya or one of the twelve solar deities known collectively as the Adityas. The function of the effaced object between his feet is not known, but it may have been a lotus mandala.

The sculpture is fairly worn due to the constant application of unguents during worship, probably at a domestic shrine. That it is an early Kashmiri representation is evident not only by the iconographic parallels cited above but also for stylistic reasons. The squat proportions, broad shoulders, and rather perfunctory modeling characterize sculptures of the sixth through seventh centuries from Kashmir and Afghanistan (P. G. Paul 1986, figs. 44–45, 50–52). The rudimentary tiara design is similar to that of a small figure of Kumara, from Taxila in Pakistan, while an almost identical lion with his crossed forepaws may be seen in a fragmentary sculpture recovered from the ancient site of Pandrethan in Kashmir (P. G. Paul 1986, figs. 50, 43, respectively).





7 *Attendants of the Sun God Surya*
Kashmir; c. 700
Phyllite; 4⅝ in (11.8 cm)
Gift of John Siudmak
M.85.134

This charming group of attendants once belonged to an image of the sun god Surya, evident by the fact that at least three figures wear boots and at least one is dressed in a long coat, characteristic attire of the god. Only one of Surya's hands remains, and it is placed on the head of the second figure on the inner row. It may be argued that the figures wearing boots may simply represent Scythian and Sahi types and are not related to Surya. The alternative would be to identify the principal deity as Vishnu. In other Vishnu images [14a, 17] the personified attribute below the god's right hand is usually a female, whereas the attribute in this fragment is a male as in a contemporary Surya image [2].

All five figures are engaged in admiring and adoring the principal deity. The most prominent is the second figure on the outer row who wears a peaked, cloth cap. Such unusual headgear is worn by Gupta-period Suryas and Revantas (see Pal 1978b, p. 59; Pal 1986, p. 255). This figure may represent Revanta, a son of Surya, who along with three other sons of Surya is to be included in images of the sun god according to an early text (Banerjea 1956, p.

437). The two attendants in front seem to carry floral offerings, while the companion on whose head the god's hand rests displays *anjalimudra* (gesture of offering or adoration) with his right hand.

The simple figures and shapes and features of the faces are reminiscent of sixth-century sculptures from Akhnur in Jammu and Ushkur in the Kashmir Valley. Closely related are small potstone reliefs generally dated no later that the seventh century (see P. G. Paul 1986, figs. 47–56, for a discussion of these early sculptures; also Pal 1967–68). Not only is this small fragment the only surviving example of an attendant group from this period, but it is also a stylistic and compositional predecessor of the more spectacular eighth-century ivory groups [8].

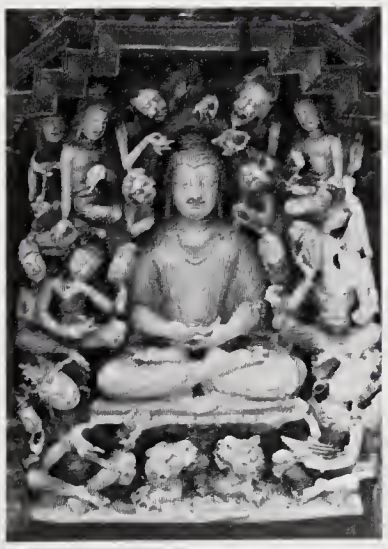




*8 A Group of Attendants*
Kashmir; eighth century or earlier
Ivory with color; 2½ in (6.3 cm)
Gift of Don and Corky Whitaker
M.83.218.4
Literature: Pal 1981a, pp. 1, 92–94.

This small fragment is closely related to a large group of finely carved ivories that have come from Tibet during the last two decades. In many, as in this example, the hair of some of the figures is painted black and traces of other colors, such as red, still adhere to the surface. Because the central figure is missing it is difficult to be certain of the identity of these attendant figures. In most of the more completely preserved examples the central figure is either a Buddha or bodhisattva. The scene may thus depict an incident from the Buddha's life or the figures may represent divine or mortal attendants adoring a bodhisattva or entertaining him with music. When complete, the composition would have looked something like the accompanying illustration of an enshrined ivory in the Kanoria collection in Patna, Bihar.

Stylistically this small fragment with deeply undercut figures is closely related to the Patna piece. In composition and figural arrangement these diminutive ivory carvings continue the well-established mode for narrative reliefs of earlier Gandharan sculpture. The deep undercutting is reminiscent of a well-known frieze depicting gods and animals (Pal 1986, p. 171). In most of these reliefs, as in this example, the figures are remarkable for their sharp contours, naturalistic postures, expressive gestures, and well-organized, overlapping forms.



Related to 8
Tableau with meditating Buddha, Kashmir, eighth century, ivory and wood. Gopi Krishna Kanoria Collection, Patna.

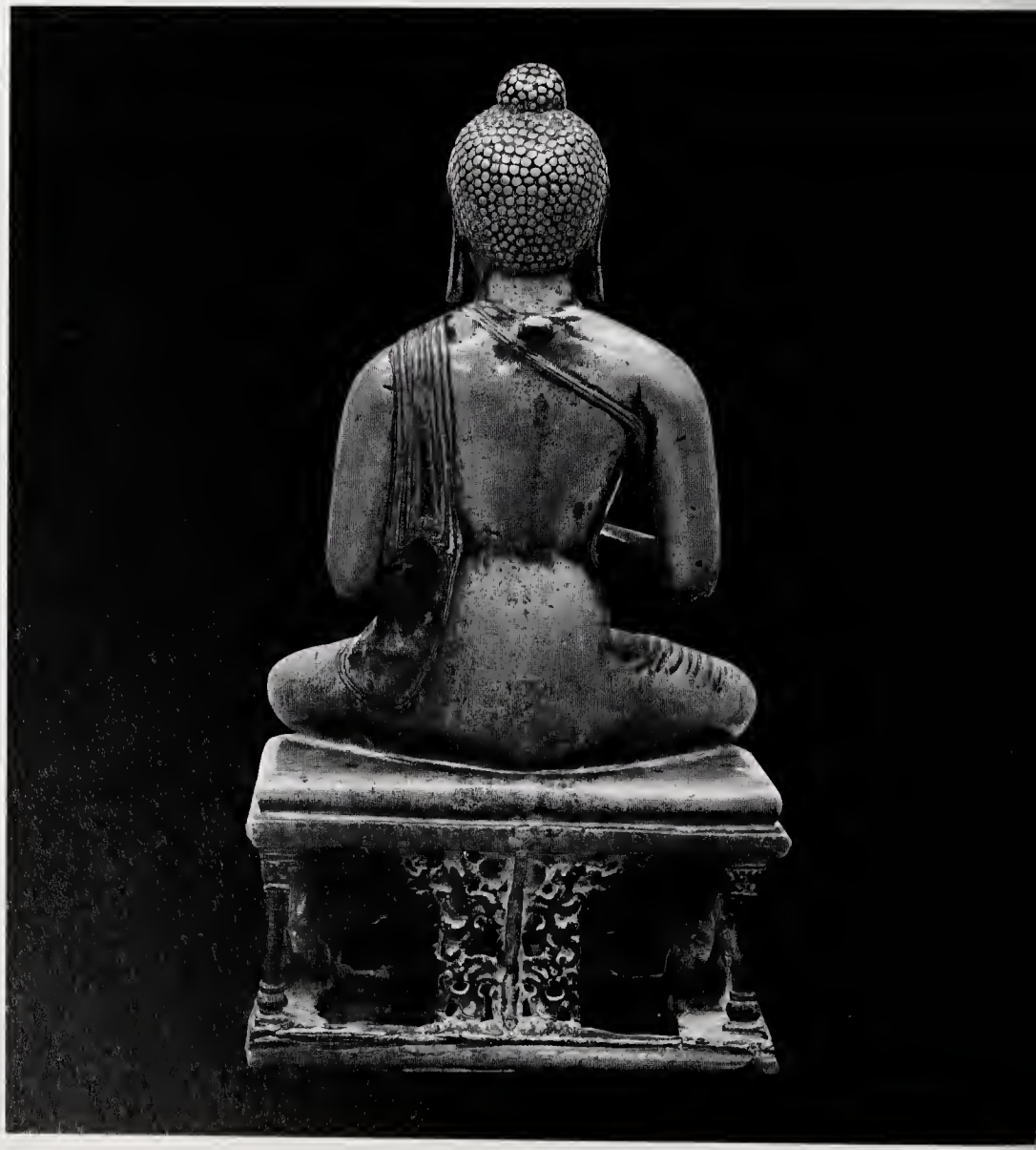
This ivory was carved sometime during the eighth century or earlier (Barrett 1975; Dwivedi 1976, pp. 101–6). Few stone reliefs have so far been found that reveal a similar figural grouping and treatment. One comparable work is a small fragment [7], which probably is slightly earlier. The other is a relief depicting the Buddha's enlightenment, which has been dated to 639 (P. G. Paul 1986, pp. 169–72, fig. 80). If Paul is correct, then the Los Angeles ivory may have to be dated to the seventh century. The inscribed sculpture, however, may have been dedicated in 739, in which case an eighth-century date would better suit the evidence cited by Barrett.



9 *A Preaching Buddha*
Kashmir; eighth century
Brass inlaid with silver; 16 in (40.6 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.69.13.5
Literature: Pal 1973, fig. 4; Pal 1975a, pp. 90–91; Snellgrove 1978, fig. 257; Schroeder 1982, pp. 116–17; Pal 1984, p. 290; Pal 1985, p. 77, fig. 19; Huntington & Huntington 1985, p. 371, fig. 17.23; Rowan 1985, pl. 29.

Seated on an elaborate throne in the posture of meditation, the Buddha is engaged in preaching. The gesture formed by his hands is known as *dharmachakrapravartanamudra* (turning the wheel of law), signifying Buddha Sakyamuni's first sermon at Sarnath. The gesture is also emblematic of the transcendental Buddha Vairochana, but the identification cannot be certain because of the absence of his mount, the peacock.

The elaborate throne is supported in the front by a seated male, probably a semidivinity such as a yaksha, two winged griffins, and a pair of lions. On the back at the corner are two columns rising from pots and supporting flaring capitals decorated with a trefoil design. In the middle is a plain shaft from which floriate designs spread out on both sides. The Buddha was represented on a lion throne as early as the Kushan period, but the yaksha and griffin seem to be local Kashmiri additions, perhaps in the eighth century (Barrett 1962). The seated yaksha is stylistically very similar to those supporting pediments recovered from Parihasapura in the



Kashmir Valley, while the Buddha bears a striking resemblance to a headless stone Buddha recently dated to 639 (P. G. Paul 1986, figs. 80, 82). The bronze is also similar to the well-known Kashmiri bronze Buddha recovered from Fatehpur near Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh (Schroeder 1982, p. 117, fig. 15c). When first published this inscribed bronze was dated to the sixth century, but the present consensus is for an eighth-century date. The Fatehpur and Los Angeles bronzes very likely were made during the reign of Lalitaditya of Kashmir sometime during the first half of the eighth century.

In contrast to the naturalistic modeling of the yaksha, the figure of the Buddha is treated with greater abstraction. The animals are rendered conceptually, the animated griffins contrasting with the heraldic lions. The Buddha's garment folds are delineated with schematic articulation. A short lug below the neck indicates that a halo once was provided for the head.



*10 Vishnu Killing Madhu and Kaitabha*
Kashmir; eighth or ninth century
Phyllite; 18¾ in (47.6 cm)
Gift of Margery and Harry Kahn
M.83.72
Literature: Pal 1985, p. 77, fig. 20.

In this sculpture the god Vishnu is depicted destroying the demons Madhu and Kaitabha.



There are several versions of this myth, but the essentials are as follows. Once while Vishnu was engaged in his yogic sleep [36], with Brahma seated atop a lotus emerging from Vishnu's navel, Madhu and Kaitabha emerged from Brahma's ears and were about to destroy him. Brahma woke Vishnu and asked for his help. Vishnu engaged the two demons, and a long battle ensued. In their delusion the demons offered a boon to Vishnu, who asked for their lives. The demons agreed to surrender, provided Vishnu could slay them on land. As they were battling in the middle of the ocean, Vishnu placed the demons on his dry thighs and killed them.

Despite iconic requirements the sculptor has given us an impressively dramatic representation. Vishnu sits imperiously like a colossus, in contrast to the earth goddess Prithivi between his feet and two hapless, somewhat amusing demons caught in the god's hands. With his second pair of hands Vishnu holds against his chest a conch, which he blows frequently on the battlefield. In his third pair of hands are a bow and arrow, while in his two remaining hands he holds aloft the solar and lunar disks, thereby emphasizing his cosmic nature.

Both for its composition and iconography this is a unique Vishnu representation not only in Kashmir but in India as well. Even though symmetry predominates and Vishnu sits firm and erect, the composition is infused with a dynamic vigor, especially in the handling of the demons. Noteworthy also are the solid, thick limbs of the god, which exude strength and power. The thighs may have been deliberately enlarged to serve as broad chopping blocks for the demise of the demons. Why the surface was left rough, especially the limbs and base, is not known. Rarely does one come across such summary treatment as a deliberate attempt to create an aesthetic effect. More likely the project could not be completed. (For a discussion of other incomplete sculptures on the subcontinent see Williams 1986.)



*11 The Infant Buddha*
Kashmir; c. 800
Brass inlaid with silver and copper;
5¾ in (14.6 cm)
Museum Acquisition Fund
M.87.233

Metal images of the infant Buddha are common in China, Korea, and Japan, where they are still the focal point of a ritual performed on the Buddha's birthday. To date, however, no such image had come to light on the Indian subcontinent until the recent appearance of this bronze. Thus it provides the first tangible evidence that the cult was familiar in India and is not an invention of the Chinese. Curiously the *Nilamatapurana,* an eighth-century Hindu religious text composed in Kashmir, describes a rite to be performed on the Buddha's birthday

that involves the bathing of an image of the Buddha. In East Asia the image used is that of the infant Buddha, who was ceremoniously bathed by the gods immediately after his miraculous birth. Bronze images such as this very likely were used in similar rituals observed in Kashmir as well. The cult may have been popular only in that region of the subcontinent, for to date no other Indian bronze of an infant Buddha has come to light in any other part of the country even among the several large hoards of Buddhist bronzes discovered from sites in Bihar, Bengal, and Orissa.

The image significantly differs from Chinese and Japanese representations in that the child's right hand forms the gesture of reassurance like an adult Buddha, whereas in East Asian representations his hand—occassionally the left—generally points to the sky. The gesture signifies the Buddha's spiritual sovereignty over the universe, which is also symbolized by the seven steps he took immediately after his birth. When the sacred bath of the infant Buddha is shown in early Indian, Tibetan, and Nepalese narrative compositions, his hand is never raised. The upraised hand with the pointed finger may therefore have been a Chinese invention.

The Buddha is portrayed as an adolescent rather than an infant. Curiously also in this bronze as in most such images in other Buddhist countries his hair is arranged in small curls like that of an adult Buddha. In his biography it is said that he did not cut his hair off until his renunciation at the age of twenty-nine, at which point to indicate his divinity his hair immediately appeared in two-inch strands curling to the right. His ears too are elongated like a full-grown Buddha, and a hole marks the *urna,* one of the supernatural signs of a great man. This very likely was inlaid with a precious stone. The figure is otherwise naked like a boy except for his loincloth or short dhoti, which looks almost like a diaper. This garment is richly inlaid with copper and silver strips, while the eyes are inlaid with silver and the pupils are marked with a black substance. The inscription on the base is difficult to decipher, but the donor's name appears to be Śrīdeva.





*12 The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara*
Kashmir; ninth century
Brass inlaid with silver; 6⅛ in (15.6 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.74.5.2
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 65, no. 53; Pal 1975c, pp. 138–39; Schroeder 1982, pp. 84–85, no. 63.



The youthful bodhisattva sits in the meditation posture on a lotus with artichokelike leaves. He wears a dhoti and scarf and is adorned with various ornaments and a tiara. His hair is braided and arranged in a fan-shaped chignon behind the tiara. In the central lobe of the tiara is a tiny image of Amitabha, his parental Buddha. The presence of this Buddha and the lotus in his left hand identify the figure as Avalokiteshvara or Padmapani (lotus bearer). His right hand, placed against his right knee, is open in the gesture of charity. He wears the sacred cord of the higher caste.

The design of the lotus and naturalistic modeling of the figure are characteristic of Kashmir. The plasticity of the torso is clearly indicated by the subtle modulation of the pectoral muscles. The rather fleshy face, with half-shut, inlaid eyes, bears a youthful expression. The right palm is marked with a circle enclosing a cross, probably representing the wheel of the law. The palms of divinities and superhuman beings usually are marked with auspicious symbols, either a wheel or lotus.

Schroeder (1982) has attributed this bronze to the Swat Valley, but neither its style nor the material point to such an attribution (see Reedy 1986, p. 387, fig. 49).



*13 The Buddha Sakyamuni or Maitreya*
Kashmir; ninth century
Brass inlaid with silver; 6⅞ in (17.5 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.76.2.33
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 65, no. 54; Glynn 1972, fig. 7; Pal 1974a, p. 21, no. 18; Pal 1975c, pp. 112–13; Schroeder 1982, pp. 120–21, no. 17f.

In his personal characteristics this Buddha figure does not differ from others in the collection [5, 9]. The circle between his eyes representing the *urna* is prominently indicated. His hands form the gesture of turning the wheel of law as in the earlier bronze [9]. His posture and throne, however, are different. He is seated upright, in *pralambapadasana* with his legs bent on a lion throne placed on a lotus. This seated position is generally mistakenly translated as "European posture." This posture appears as early as the Kushan period in the famous statue of Emperor Vima Kadphises (r. 1–50?) in the Mathura Museum and was adopted by Buddhists to emphasize the spiritual sovereignty of the historical Buddha Sakyamuni and the future Buddha Maitreya. The association with royal imagery is also emphasized in early representations by placing the Buddha on a lion throne. The Buddha's feet in this bronze are placed on

lotuses with artichokelike petals to further symbolize his divine nature. A tiny female figure kneels on one side of the base. Very likely she is an idealized representation of the pious donor of the bronze.

The figure may represent either Sakyamuni or Maitreya. In China, Nepal, and Tibet similarly seated figures are often identified as Maitreya, in some instances based on inscriptional evidence. In the Indian context, however, no image has so far been found where the seated figure is precisely identified as Maitreya nor is there an iconographic tradition associating this posture exclusively with Maitreya. The hand gesture, however, is appropriate for Sakyamuni and Maitreya.

The style of the figure is closely related to the slightly earlier seated Buddha [9]. Not only are the garments of both treated in the same manner, but the proportions and modeling of the figure, more abstract than in other Kashmiri figures, are also similar. The features of the diminutive donor unfortunately are much too effaced to be clearly discerned. The lions are articulately rendered; each has one paw raised and roars menacingly. Such spirited lion depictions are rather rare in Kashmiri bronzes.



*14a–b The God Vishnu*

*a,* Kashmir; c. 850
Brass inlaid with copper;
18¼ in (46.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.80.6.2
Literature: Pal 1966, pp. 62–65, no. 51; Pal 1973, fig. 3; Pal 1973–74, fig. 5; Pal 1975c, pp. 9–10, fig. 8; Craven 1976, p. 176, fig. 12; Schroeder 1982, pp. 118–19, no. 16d; Mukherjee 1985, pl. 14; Rowan 1985, pl. 30.

*b,* Kashmir; 875–900
Chlorite; 23½ (59.7 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.69.13.2
Literature: Glynn 1972, fig. 8.

14a



14a Detail of back





14b



The best-known Kashmiri bronze in the collection is among the most impressive surviving metal representations of a type of Vishnu image that may be regarded as a hallmark of Kashmiri art.

The god, along with the earth goddess Prithivi, two of his personified attributes, and portrait of a devotee, is represented in his *chaturāna* (four-faced) aspect. The three divine figures are placed on a rectangular socle with a spout on one side to drain off liquids poured on it during worship. A female donor kneels against the base in front and looks up adoringly at the god. Richly attired, diademed, and ornamented, Vishnu holds the lotus and conch with two hands; his two other hands rest on the heads of his personified attributes. His four heads are human, lion, boar, and demon, signifying, respectively, power, wisdom, sovereignty and majesty, and energy.

The personified attributes, representing his great weapons the club and wheel, are Gadanari, club woman [21], below the right hand, and Chakrapurusha, wheel man, below the left. Both look up at the god in admiration as they hold the flywhisk in their right hands. The left hand of Gadanari is raised in the gesture of adoration, while that of Chakrapurusha is placed on his thigh. The earth goddess emerges from the socle and seems to support the god's feet. The effigy of the male donor, now lost, was once attached to the corner opposite the kneeling female. The female donor's right hand is also raised in adoration, with her forefinger and thumb touching each other; her left hand holds offerings in a bowl.

The Sanskrit dedicatory inscription on the base, written in the Sarada script, records that a royal officer of King Sukhapurna performed an *adhvaram* (sacrifice) in honor of the god Śārṅgin, Bearer of the Bow, an epithet of Vishnu. This image clearly was dedicated on that occasion.

No date unfortunately is given in the inscription, and the name Sukhapurna is not known from Kalhana's history of Kashmiri kings. Very likely, however, Sukhapurna is probably Sukhavarman, a kingmaker in mid-ninth-century Kashmir, whose son Avantivarman (855/56–83) was installed as the first monarch of the Utpala dynasty.

That the figures were meant to be seen from the front only is evident from the relatively perfunctory treatment of the back. Two interesting features should be noted: the angry head of the god facing the back is strikingly delineated and framed by a plain halo, and the rolling, enlarged eyes, with their ends extended to create a masklike effect, thick, furrowed brows, jowly cheeks, and moustach make the visage particularly expressive.

In addition to the silver inlay of the eyes, common in Kashmiri bronzes, the garments of all the figures were once inlaid with strips of silver and copper. Only the copper inlay now remains. One can well imagine how much more splendid the bronze must have looked in its original condition. The continual application of unguents, indicating the prolonged worship of the bronze, has caused the surface to wear away.

When complete the chlorite image of Vishnu (*b*) would have been a sculpture of imposing size. Although damaged, its original form and iconography can be easily apprehended by comparing it with the more complete bronze (*a*). The lion and boar faces are more clearly differentiated, but the demonic head at the back is not as finely executed and lacks the other's dramatic expressiveness. Rather than displaying anger, it seems to be sad. The buttocks are more articulately modeled, the back in general, however, is less well defined than the front. Two other minor differences are noteworthy. Vishnu here is given a short dagger stuck into his sash and is adorned with three strands of pearls instead of one. As is usual in stone representations the dhoti is not flamboyantly delineated.

It is generally considered that the short dagger was given to Kashmiri Vishnu images only from the reign of Avantivarman. Furthermore the elongated proportions of the figure and somewhat hard modeling indicate a later date than the bronze. Close stylistic parallels may be seen in similar Vishnu figures of the Avantivarman period recovered form Avantipur (D. Mitra 1977, pl. XII).

*15 The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara*
Kashmir or western Himalayas;
ninth or tenth century
Copper alloy with traces of paint;
3⅛ in (8.0 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.53.5
Literature: Pal 1967–68a, pl. XIII, fig. 9; Pal 1975c, p. 94; Klimberg-Salter 1982, p. 175, pl. 88.

This small bronze may have been used as an image in a portable shrine, but neither its place of origin nor date of execution is easy to determine. A material examination was inconclusive and demonstrated that it could have been created in Kashmir or the western Himalayas (Reedy 1986, p. 410, fig. 135).

The image represents a type of bodhisattva figure popular in the northeast from the Kushan period. Several examples dating between the seventh and ninth centuries from Kashmir have come to light (see Pal 1975a, nos. 45–46, 93, for a Gandharan prototype). The style and aesthetics of this diminutive bronze, however, differ from that of other Kashmiri examples. The workmanship is not quite as refined, and the details are more sketchily rendered.

The bodhisattva is the same lotus-bearing Avalokiteshvara as in entry 12, with one noteworthy iconographic difference. As is common he holds the lotus in his left hand and the right hand touches the temple of the tilted head. The gesture symbolizes his contemplative nature as he ponders how to remove the misery of the world and save all sentient beings. In this image type the Kashmiri artist has also emphasized the bodhisattva's ascetic nature by not adorning him with ornaments or tiara. In addition to his ascetic hairdo he is also given a mendicant's black antelope skin.

Klimberg-Salter (1982) has dated this piece to the eighth century, which seems much too early. Although the pointed halo with flame design occurs much earlier in Central Asia and China, in Kashmir and the western Himalayas it did not become popular before the ninth century. Moreover the form of the lotus base with paired lobes appears in Kashmiri images generally after the ninth century. The somewhat crude workmanship probably indicates that it was made in a provincial workshop.



*16 The God Samvara*
Kashmir; ninth or tenth century
Brass inlaid with silver; 8½ in (21.6 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck
Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.85.2.4
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 62, no. 50; Pal 1975c, pp. 173–75; Beguin 1977, no. 38; Schroeder 1982, pp. 126–27, no. 20f; Klimberg-Salter 1982, p. 106, pl. 34.



Among the small Kashmiri bronzes discovered to date, this is certainly the most elaborate and dramatic. The god represented is the powerful Vajrayana deity Samvara, the presiding deity of rituals prescribed in the important esoteric Buddhist text known as the *Chakrasamvaratantra* (dates unknown). This is the only known example of the god's representation to have survived from the northwest.

The god strikes the militant *alidha* posture as he places his right foot in the lap of the Hindu goddess Kalaratri (Night of dread) and his left foot on the hip of Bhairava. The tableau takes place on a lotus supported by a rocky base. Samvara wears a lion skin, garland of skulls, and various jewels. He has four heads, each provided with a third eye, and six pairs of arms. His hair is arranged in a chignon and adorned with a crescent and skulls. In addition the tiny figures of three transcendental Buddhas, Akshobhya (the Imperturbable) in front, Amitabha (Infinite light) on the left, and Ratnasambhava (Born of jewel) on the right, are visible.

Samvara's two primary hands are crossed against his chest and hold the bell and thunderbolt in *vajrahuṁkāramudrā* (gesture of thunderbolt sound). The two uppermost hands stretch the flayed skin of an elephant above his head. One right arm is broken, but the other arms (from bottom to top) hold the staff of a broken emblem, chopper, and trident. On the other side the attributes are the severed heads of the Hindu god Brahma, noose, skull cup, and a *khaṭṭvāṅga* (cot's leg weapon with skull). Most emblems are crowned with the thunderbolt. The three frontal faces have calm expressions, but the face at the back is ferocious.

The goddess Kalaratri is none other than the emaciated Chamunda [38]. Two of her hands hold the chopper and trident, but curiously her other two hands are engaged in supporting Samvara's right foot on her lap. This is a unique iconographic feature as is the rocky base. The goddess seems to assume the role played by Sri-Lakshmi in recumbent Vishnu images [36]. Usually Kalaratri too is trampled by Samvara as is her spouse Bhairava on the other side. Bhairava holds only the trident. With his left arms he supports himself as he looks up at Samvara, whom he salutes with one of his two right hands.

The sculpture once possessed an aureole and despite the rendition of the fourth head was meant to be viewed only from the front. The physiognomy and masklike treatment of the eyes inlaid with silver are remarkably similar to that of the angry face of Vishnu on the inscribed bronze [14a]. The front of the halo has been cleverly delineated on the elephant hide. The treatment of the rocky base, which considerably enhances the liveliness of the tableau above, is typical of Kashmiri sculptures. The bronze is not only a tour de force but is also a unique Kashmiri representation of a Buddhist deity.



*17 The God Vishnu*
Kashmir; ninth or tenth century
Copper alloy; 5½ in (14.0 cm)
Gift of Gary Crawford
M.82.223



This small bronze Vishnu iconographically is very similar to an earlier example in the collection [14a], except that the god has only one head. Stylistically, however, this Vishnu is quite distinct. Not only do the figures differ in proportion and modeling, but details are much more perfunctorily delineated in this bronze. The shape of the diadem and halo also differ. Although this particular halo shape with flame design marked along the edge occurs earlier in Central Asia and China, most surviving Kashmiri images dating to the ninth century or earlier usually have a plain, circular halo. Another interesting detail is the manner in which the ribbons of the diadem are shown on either side of the head. This arrangement generally is not encountered in Kashmiri Vishnu images but occurs in Buddhist figures. Flying ribbons were common in earlier Kushano-Sasanian coins and representations of Buddhist figures from Bamian and Fondukistan, Afghanistan. The motif seems to have been introduced into Kashmir not much before the eighth century. In surviving Kashmiri Hindu sculptures the ribbons are usually tied at the back. Nevertheless a Kashmiri provenance for this bronze is indicated by a technical examination of the material (see Reedy 1986, p. 390, fig. 61), while the shape and design of the halo point to a ninth-century date or later.



*18 A Celestial Attendant*
Kashmir; tenth century
Bronze inlaid with silver; 4¼ in (10.8 cm)
Indian Art Special Purpose Fund
M.81.25



This charming figure represents a celestial attendant and was attached to the top of an aureole. Portrayed as an ascetic, he is shown genuflecting as he looks down and offers a garland with both hands. The subject of the attendant's adoration would have been seated or standing below him. Very likely the central figure was a Buddha. Such celestial garland bearers, usually shown flying, appear first in the northwest in the art of Gandhara. The figure ultimately derives from classical art. Their placement on a frame or aureole of an image may be ascertained from a complete example (Pal 1975c, p. 133).

There are at least two stylistic parallels for this figure. One is a divine censor bearer, formerly in the George Bickford collection, Cleveland (von Schroeder 1982, pp. 120–21, fig. 173), generally dated to the ninth or tenth century. Closer in style is a pair of celestial adorers on the summit of an avatar frame now in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum, Srinagar (Pal 1975c, p. 71).

*19 The God Surya*
Kashmir; tenth century
Bronze; 6½ in (16.5 cm)
Indian Art Special Purpose Fund
M.79.99



This image of the sun god Surya differs in important ways from the earlier example [2]. Here the god has the same attributes but is seated in a chariot drawn by seven horses and driven by the celestial charioteer Aruna, who holds a stick behind his head. Surya wears boots and a coat, indicated by two lines incised along his torso. He does not have a cape but wears a scarf that drapes his shoulders. His tiara consists of three medallions, and his hair cascades down his shoulders in braids, some of which form loops like the garland in his upper-right hand. The sword between his thighs is also much larger. The figure is framed by an aureole and nimbus, the design of the former being similar to that seen in a stone sculpture in the collection [21].

A material examination has determined that the bronze was made in Kashmir (see Reedy 1986, p. 388, fig. 54), although the metal is not pale yellow as are most Kashmiri bronzes of the period. Other details, however, such as the tiara design, hairstyle, and modeling, are characteristic of Kashmiri sculpture. The formal qualities of the figure are closely related to those of a circa 1000 Maitreya [24].



*20 An Uma-Mahesvara Image*
Kashmir; tenth century
Stone; 3¼ in (8.3 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Frank Neustatter and Indian Art Special Purpose Fund
M.78.103



Although small, this is a fine and rare representation from Kashmir of a type of image known in Sanskrit literature as Uma-Mahesvara. The male figure is Siva, who is seated in the posture of grace on his bull, Nandi. Resting on Siva's left thigh is his spouse, known variously as Parvati, Uma, or Ambika. Characteristic of Kashmir, Siva is given three heads symbolizing his three aspects. The frontal head represents his normal, pacific nature; the awesome head on his right signifies his *bhairava,* or angry, aspect; the third head represents the feminine principle. His arms, except for the upper right, unfortunately are broken. The object he holds probably is a trident. Uma's hands are also broken. Above Siva's *bhairava* head is a crescent. All three figures are framed by a distinctive aureole.

The design of the elaborate aureole behind both deities is found also in a Surya image [21]. The figures of Siva and Surya are similar as well, making it likely that the two pieces are from the same region. A closer stylistic parallel for the figures may be seen in a Buddhist bronze from Kashmir (Pal 1977a, p. 56, no. 29). In both the female figures sit in identical fashion with the rather curious disposition of the legs. The green-gray stone is frequently encountered in Kashmiri sculpture.

*21 Personified Club*
Kashmir; c. 900
Chlorite; 9½ in (24.1 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by the Smart Family Foundation through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar G. Richards
M.87.62



This elegantly postured lady is the personification of Vishnu's club attribute, used to dispel illusion [see 14a]. Because the Sanskrit word *gadā,* meaning "club," is of the feminine gender the weapon is personified as a female. According to the *Vishṇudharmottarapurāṇa,* Gadadevi (or Gadanari) also represents the goddess Sri-Lakshmi, spouse of Vishnu. In a complete relief she would have stood to Vishnu's right with his lower-right hand placed on the club's knob projecting above her head. As in other Kashmiri Vishnu images she holds the flywhisk and looks up adoringly at Vishnu. The gesture of her left hand expresses her amazement at beholding Vishnu's majesty.

Stylistically this well-proportioned figure is closely related to the Gandanari of a more elaborate bronze [14a]. A noteworthy difference is the absence of the tailored blouse and elegant hairstyle. The abrupt transition of the waist and swelling hips and belly indicate a somewhat later date for this figure.

*22a–b The God Ganesa*
Kashmir; tenth-eleventh century

*a,* bronze; 6 in (15.2 cm)
Gift of Christian Humann
M.78.130.2
Literature: Pal 1981a, p. 63, no. 49; Postel et al. 1985, p. 102, fig. 124.

*b,* brass; 2¾ in (7.1 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Wesley Halpert in memory of Rudi
M.81.213

Both bronzes represent the Hindu god Ganesa, although *a* is better preserved than *b*. In both Ganesa is seated in *lalitasana* (posture of grace) on the back of two lions facing to the side. In the better preserved example the god holds his broken tusk (used as a pen or weapon), rosary, battle-ax, and bowl of sweets, which he is eating. The second figure must also have had identical attributes. The rotund bodies are framed by circular aureoles and the crowned heads by pointed halos. The base is missing in *b*. The disproportionately small lions, which appear like cats, seem crushed by the weight of their portly lords.

While the rat usually is the mount of Ganesa, in the northwest, from Afghanistan to Himachal Pradesh, he is often given the lion as a mount. This lion-riding Ganesa is known as Heramba in literature and is supposed to have more than four arms. Partly because of the presence of the lion and design of the aureole, the better-preserved bronze has been attributed to Himachal Pradesh by Postel et al. (1985). Iconographically and stylistically, however, the bronze is closely akin to a Kashmiri stone example (Pal 1981a, p. 64, no. 50), and material considerations suggest that both bronzes were made in Kashmir (Reedy 1986, pp. 389–90, nos. 58, 63).

The effaced condition of *b* is due to the constant application of unguents during daily worship. It has been so consistently rubbed that much of the trunk has disappeared.

22a



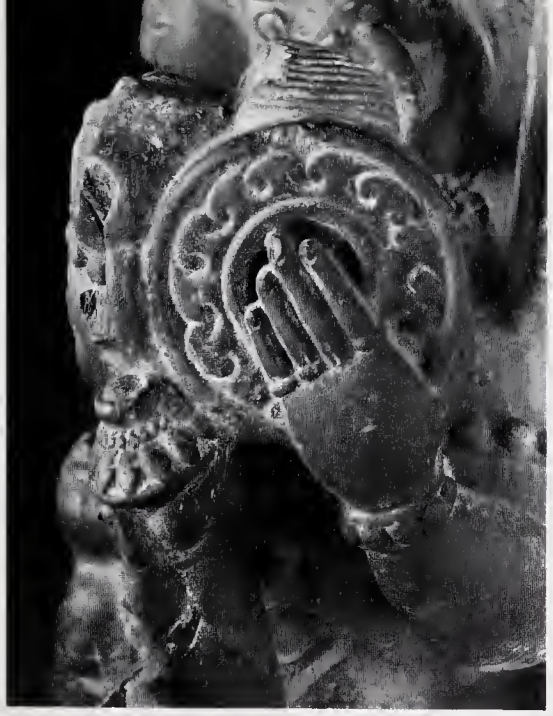
22b



*23 Vishnu with Lakshmi astride Garuda*
Kashmir; eleventh century
Phyllite; 23 in (58.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.53.1
Literature: Pal 1973–74, p. 37, figs. 6–7; Postel et al. 1985, pp. 100–101, fig. 120.

With the petite Lakshmi perched on his thigh, the god Vishnu sits astride Garuda on a lotus base. Except for his posture, Vishnu is given the same iconographic features as in an earlier bronze [12a]. The mace and wheel attributes represented here are not personified as in the earlier image but are held in his upper hands. His upper-left hand is placed on Lakshmi's shoulders and holds the wheel.









Lakshmi's right hand is raised in the gesture of adoration. Her left hand holds a lotus. Her feet are crossed at the ankle and placed on a lotus. Like his master, Garuda has four arms. Two hands form *namaskāramudrā* (gesture of salutation), two other hands support the god's feet. Garuda also wears a long garland of wildflowers as does his lord.

Postel et al. (1985, literature above) has unconvincingly suggested that the sculpture dates from the tenth century. Two stone examples, now in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum, have been found in Kashmir, one at a place called Verinag (Postel et al. 1985, p. 100, figs. 118–19). Although Verinag is not far from Chamba and a close relationship existed between the artistic traditions of the two regions, no image in Chamba has yet been discovered that is stylistically close to either this example or the two in Srinagar. The published representations from Chamba are of a later date and are quite different. Moreover such details as the curious design of the club, tiara, and lotus pedestal are more characteristic of Kashmir than Chamba. Finally the stone also is more typical of Kashmir than Chamba.

The sculpture stylistically is similar to that recovered from the Verinag area, although the form is somewhat more mannered. Details have been rendered with precision and exuberance. The sculptor obviously delighted in a flamboyant display of his craftsmanship as is evident from the luxuriant design of Garuda's wings and tail feathers that spread out behind him like a potted palm. Even more striking is the rendering of the Garuda head in front and Vishnu's angry head ingeniously framed by a halo in back. Vishnu's expression and elaborate coiffure contribute to the distinctiveness of the representation, revealing the sculptor's rich imagination and sensitivity.

24 *Bodhisattva Maitreya*
Kashmir; c. 1000
Brass with color and inlaid with silver;
8¼ in (21.0 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.76.2.34
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 66, no. 55; Pal 1974a, p. 24, no. 22; Pal 1975c, pp. 130–31; Schroeder 1982, pp. 128–29, fig. 21d.

The future Buddha Maitreya is represented here as a bodhisattva. He rests on a lotus seat with his right leg folded back and his left leg placed on a lotus on the rectangular pedestal. Basically he is represented as an ascetic brahman, although he wears princely ornaments. His tall chignon is adorned with a miniature stupa and strings of pearls. The presence of the stupa on the crown distinguishes the figure as Maitreya. The long garland is unusual but is encountered in other bodhisattva images from the region. In his right hand he holds a rosary and in his left a fluted waterpot. The bodhisattva is surrounded by an aureole and pointed halo, each decorated with the stylized flame motif.

The blue and gold paint adhering to the hair and face of Maitreya suggest that the bronze was once used in Tibet. Additional evidence is provided by a short Tibetan inscription etched on the front of the base. Only the first two syllables are legible (*niya kli*), and they have no meaning.

Although the bronze was meant to be viewed from the front, the figure is conceived in the round, its plastic qualities have been well articulated. The flying scarf and flaming aureole and halo add a sense of movement to the otherwise serene figure. Especially noteworthy are the wide, staring, silver-inlaid eyes and black eyebrows. Stylistically the bronze is closely related to a bodhisattva image dedicated during the reign of Queen Didda (r. 980–1003) and now in the Sri Pratap Singh Museum (Pal 1975c, pp. 146–47).



25 *The Goddess Kurukulla*
Kashmir or western Himalayas; c. 1000
Brass; 10¼ in (26.0 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Kurit
M.86.225.1

On a small lotus atop a rectangular socle with a decorated base sits the Buddhist goddess Kurukulla, an emanation of the savior goddess Tara. Her feet cross each other at the ankles, and her knees are held in place by a scarf known as a *yogapaṭṭa,* which is generally used by yogis during meditation.

The goddess is adorned regally. She wears a dhoti, fitted and tailored blouse, and two scarves around her head and shoulders. The scarf ends flutter elegantly on either side of her, enhancing the lively composition. Her hair is stylishly arranged in rolls, that on her left adorned with a florid gander and the other with a ribbed motif, perhaps an *amalaka*. With her upper arms she holds a bow and arrows. Although her arms are broken, their forms are distinct. The upper portion of the emblem in her lower-right hand is broken, but it may have been a goad. The object in the second left hand is a plant of some kind. In one of her forms known as Kurukulla of Uddiyana she is supposed to hold a red lotus. Immediately behind the figure is a metal triangle, which is part of a diagrammatic symbol of the goddesses in tantric rituals. She is further surrounded by an aureole and nimbus, the raised outer edges of which are decorated with alternating flame and gem or lotus symbols.

Despite the uncertainty about two of the four emblems, the figure can be identified as Kurukulla, which would make this the first Kashmiri representation of the goddess found to date. Whatever its exact identification, the sculpture is of unusual interest for its rich detailing and technical complexity. The pierced design of the luxuriant vegetal scroll motif along the base is yet to be encountered in any sculpture from the region. Stylistically the figure is closely related to female representations in the Queen Didda bronze (Pal 1975c, pp. 146– 47) and to the figures in the eleventh-century murals in the Alchi monastery in Ladakh and early manuscript illuminations from western Tibet (Pal 1983, pp. 123–26).



26 *A Buddha*
Kashmir or western Himalayas; eleventh or twelfth century
Bronze with traces of paint; 4½ in (11.5 cm)
Gift of Anna C. Walter
M.83.220.5

A Buddha stands on a lotus above a simple molded base. The slight flexion of the body, flame design of the aureole, and pointed nimbus imbue the figure with a sense of movement. His right hand displays the gesture of reassurance, and his left hand holds the ends of his drapery. The edges and hems of his garments are trimmed with a granular design as is the lotus pericarp. The undulating upper border across the chest looks like a collar. The Buddha may represent the historical Sakyamuni or the transcendental Amoghasiddhi of the Vajrayana pantheon.

The details of the hair, face, hands, and lotus petals are rather similarly delineated. The modeling is not quite as naturalistic as in most Kashmiri bronzes, and the Buddha seems to have been given a slight paunch. The bronze may have been cast in Kashmir or in the Tibetan cultural region of the western Himalayas.



27 *The God Vishnu*
Himachal Pradesh or Kashmir; seventh century
Schist; 7⅝ in (19.8 cm)
Gift of James H. Coburn III
M.85.279.1





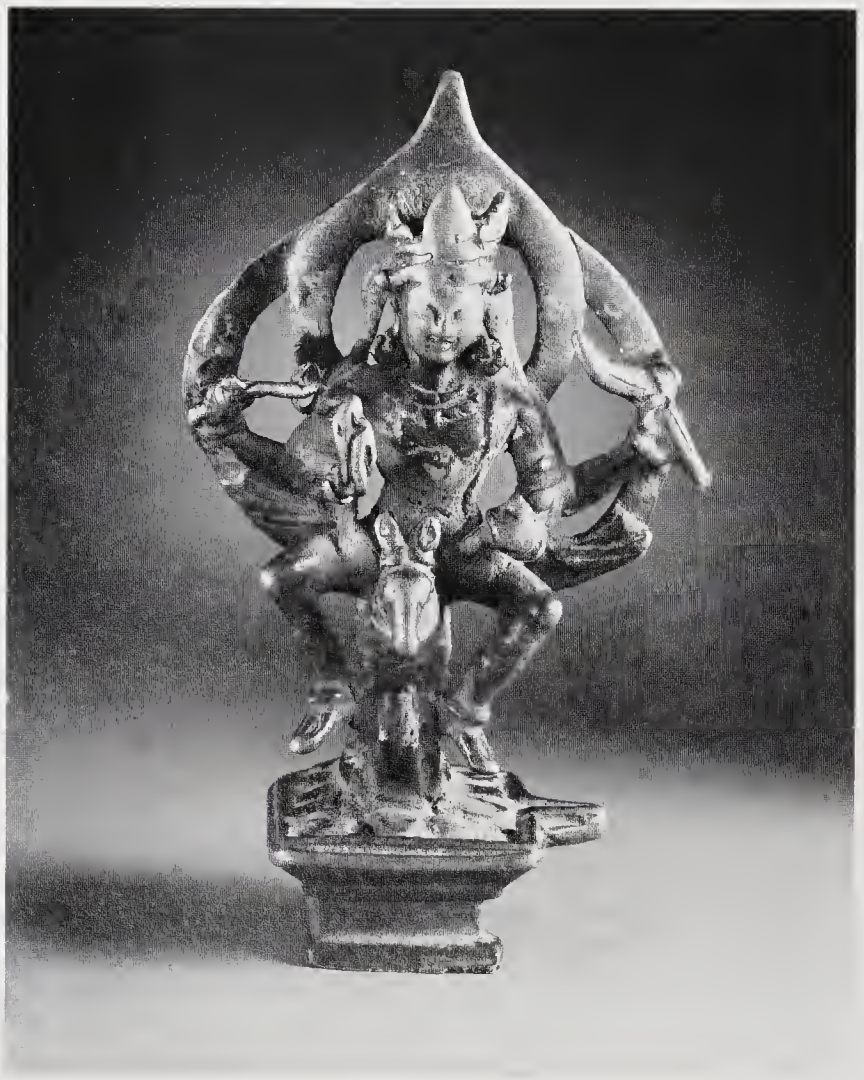
On a shallow socle are the figures of the god Vishnu and his wheel attribute Chakrapurusha. Between his feet once was placed the figure of the earth goddess [see 14a]. Vishnu's right arms are broken, but the conch held in his upper-left hand is articulately delineated. His second left hand rests on the head of the diminutive Chakrapurusha. The wheel is very clearly represented at the back, which is otherwise not as well modeled or defined as the front.

In contrast to the immobile figure of Vishnu, Chakrapurusha strikes a graceful pose with his arms crossed in front in *vinayahastamudra* (gesture of humility). This particular gesture is clearly a survival from the Gupta period (see Pal 1986, p. 227). By the eighth century in most representations of Chakrapurusha in Kashmiri Vishnu images [14a] he holds in his right hand a flywhisk. Various other details also announce a date earlier than the eighth century. The simple form, somewhat stocky proportions, rendering of the hair at the temple in sausage curls, and shape of the tiara and small halo are early rather than late representations. Rather unusual is the manner in which the sash is tied across the front. It generally falls higher over the left thigh and lower on the right. Here the sash hangs in reverse and the knot is tied differently.

Thus a seventh-century date for this sculpture seems certain, but its place of origin is more difficult to determine. While a Kashmiri provenance is not unlikely, the sculpture also may have been rendered in Himachal Pradesh.



*28 A Solar Deity*
Himachal Pradesh or Kashmir; eleventh century
Brass; 5 in (12.7 cm)
Gift of James and Jane Singer
M.86.249.2



A four-armed male, diademed and ornamented, sits astride an animal that looks like a mule but is very likely a horse. His legs are fitted with boots. His other clothing is difficult to discern, except for his scarf, the ends of which flutter on either side of him. The deity is surrounded by an aureole and pointed halo. He holds a bow and arrow in his two upper hands. The second right hand holds either a rosary or garland. The abraded surface of the object and emblem clasped by the other hand make an exact identification difficult. The animal stands on a socle with a lotus on top and spout on one side.

If the mount is a horse, he may represent the sun or moon god, the solar deity Revanta or Kalki, tenth avatar of Vishnu. Kalki, however, must brandish a sword and is not generally equipped with boots. As part of northern attire boots usually are worn by solar deities, such as Surya, his son Revanta, or one of the Adityas. Revanta generally brandishes a sword and holds a cup, but he is also given a bow and arrows (Pandey 1971, p. 137). As a solar deity he may also hold a garland [see 21]. Thus the identification of this figure with a hitherto unknown form of Revanta is not farfetched. Surya is known to ride a single horse in a relief on the sun temple in Martanda, Kashmir (Goetz 1969, p. xxi). Thus while Revanta is a possibility, the figure may represent an unknown form of Surya or one of the Adityas. In any event the presence of the boots make it highly likely that he is a god of the solar group.

While Kashmir is a probable place of origin for this bronze, it could also be from Chamba. The animal is rendered so conceptually that one is uncertain whether it represents a horse, mule, or even a goat, although the latter would have had horns. The two channels for the passage of molten metal are supports for the right arms. Curiously a small ring, the exact function of which is not known, is attached to the support of the arrow.

29 *A Processional Image*
Himachal Pradesh; c. 1400
Brass; 11½ in (29.2 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Pratapaditya Pal
M.76.147.1
Literarure: Postel et al. 1985, p. 208.

Although the object has the appearance of a plaque, it was not manufactured by the repoussé process but by the lost-wax casting method. The object is from eastern Himachal Pradesh, where it is called a *mohra* (deity). Made of metal and in the form of a bust, such mohras are used as processional images during festivals (see literature above). Almost all represent either Siva or his spouse Uma, known simply as Devi, "the goddess."

There is some ambiguity about the sex of the figure. Although the broad, smiling face could represent either a male or female, the rather prominent nipples of the breast are noteworthy. Generally, however, the breasts of goddesses swell more fully. The intent to depict an androgynous figure is not unlikely. The slithering snake across the otherwise flat chest and third eye are common to Siva and Devi. Rarely are such busts provided with arms, and normally the edges are indicated by a narrow, plain molding. In this example the lateral moldings, adorned with bracelets, are almost like two arms. The deity is given a particularly elaborate crown combining the circular lotus and triangle. While a large number of such mohras have survived from various periods, this particular example is unusual for its distinctive features.



*30 A Linga Cover with Five Faces*
Himachal Pradesh; sixteenth century
Bronze; 16½ in (41.9 cm)
Gift of James H. Coburn III
M.85.279.5

This extraordinary bronze probably served as a sheath for a plain stone linga. Apart from their directional significance (four directions and the center), the five faces symbolize the five elements: earth, wind, fire, ether, and water. Each face has a different name—Sadyojata (Newborn), Aghora (Awesome), Vamadeva (Lord of the left [?]), Tatpurusha (That being [?]), and Sadasiva (Always auspicious). The Sadasiva face generally was not shown in the earlier periods and became more commonly represented after the fifteenth century.

All five faces are youthful and identical, except for the two floral ornaments on the ears of the two front faces and design of the topknot on the Sadasiva head at the summit. While each of the four lower heads is adorned with only one rearing serpent, the head on top is distinguished by three. Two serpents rise from behind his ears, while the third on top is five headed. The coiffure of each deity is arranged in the *kapardin* topknot, and the third eye for each is a small diamond. The Aghora head curiously is not given awesome features, and no attempt has been made to delineate the female face of Vamadeva, or Umāvaktra (Face of Uma), as she is alternatively designated.

All five heads are well modeled with clearly delineated features. While the shape of the face is not quite as broad, there is a stylistic kinship with the brass bust of Siva from the region [29], especially in the form of the large, open eyes. Five-headed lingas are quite common in Himachal Pradesh as is the manner in which the topknot of the Sadasiva head is rendered. Especially lively and imaginative are the representations of the snakes.





# Central and Western India

# Introduction

The sculptures discussed in this chapter are from the four modern states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat. Between the eighth and eleventh centuries the most dominant political power in much of this region were the Pratiharas or Gurjara-Pratiharas. It is not uncommon, therefore, in modern surveys of Indian art to designate the sculpture of this period, produced largely in Uttar Pradesh, parts of Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan, by the dynastic appellation *Pratihara*.[1] The Pratiharas, however, were not continuously successful in maintaining their hegemony over this vast region. For a short period, after the Pratiharas had conquered the prize city of Kanauj in 836, their political influence stretched from Panjab in the north to southern Madhya Pradesh and from Gujarat in the west to Bihar and northern Bengal in the east. Their principal rivals for dominance of the heartland of northern India were the Rashtrakutas of the Deccan and Palas of Bihar and Bengal. For a brief period in the tenth century the Rashtrakutas were successful in occupying Kanauj, and by 925 the Chandellas, feudatories of the Pratiharas, were on the rise with their capital at Khajuraho. Other principal dynasties that rose to power and political independence in southern Madhya Pradesh during the period are the Kalachuris of Tripuri, near modern Jabalpur, and the Paramāras of Dhara. Pratihara power gradually became limited to parts of Uttar Pradesh and northern Rajasthan and by 1028 was obliterated completely by the invasion of the Muslim ruler Mahmud of Ghazni (998–1030).

Various local dynasties, such as the Chāhamānas, Guhilas, Saindhavas, Śolānkis, and others, ruled Rajasthan and Gujarat during the period, serving as feudatories of the Pratiharas when they were strong but asserting their independence with the decline of the imperial authority. The successors of these various ruling families of Rajasthan and Gujarat later became known as the Rajputs. Following Mahmud's invasion, a new political dynasty known as the Gahadavalas occupied Kanauj and ruled much of Uttar Pradesh and sometimes Bihar. Until Kanauj fell to the Muslims in 1226, the struggle for possession of the city continued among the Chandellas, Gahadavalas, and Rashtrakutas. Neither the Chandellas nor the Gahadavalas were successful in establishing an empire as had the Pratiharas.

Whatever the political vicissitudes or influences of these various dynasties during this period, most ruling families favored Hinduism, which became the predominant religion in the region. With the exception of Sarnath, Buddhists had few strongholds in Uttar and Madhya Pradesh. Judging from the artistic

remains of this period, even Mathura had ceased to be an important center for the faith by the eighth century. The monasteries and temples of Sarnath, however, continued to thrive, and at least one new and impressively large monastery there was built by Kumāradevī, one of the queens of Gahadavala Govindachandra of Kanauj (r. c. 1114–54). Sarnath flourished also because of its closer proximity to the neighboring state of Bihar, where Buddhism was a dominant religious force due to the patronage of the imperial Pala dynasty. The Pala emperor Mahīpāla I (r. c. 980–1023) was responsible for restoring monasteries in Sarnath. While evidence of continued benefactions by pious Buddhists at important sites in the central region of the country survives, Buddhism was certainly not as powerful or influential as it was during the Gupta dynasty. In the west Gujarat continued to be an important Buddhist center at least through the eleventh century, but the desert region of Rajasthan has yielded very little Buddhist remains. The dearth of Buddhist bronzes of the period from central and western India, compared with their profusion from Kashmir, Bihar, and Bengal, further attests to the decline of the religion's popularity in the region.

The paucity of Buddhist material from central and western India during the period is also reflected in the museum's collection. Only one object, a bronze altarpiece from Sirpur, Madhya Pradesh [39], represents Buddhist art of this extensive area between the eighth and thirteenth centuries. Although a solitary example, it is certainly one of the most extraordinary bronzes to have survived from India. Excavations at Sirpur have revealed that during the eighth century the site was important for Hindus and Buddhists. The discovery of a large hoard of Buddhist bronzes demonstrates that, like Kurkihar and Nalanda and sites in neighboring Orissa, the Sirpur monasteries were also important centers of metal casting. Most bronzes discovered in the hoard, however, belong to the eighth or ninth century, indicating that the prosperity of the Sirpur Buddhist monasteries did not last more than a couple of centuries.

The museum's collection includes a much larger selection of Jain sculptures primarily from Rajasthan and Gujarat ranging in date from the ninth through the sixteenth centuries. Unlike Buddhism, Jainism continues to flourish in these regions. The best known and largest cluster of Jain temples, built largely of marble, may be seen in the Dilwara shrine on Mount Abu. Although now in Rajasthan, the region was at one time under the political and cultural influence of Gujarat, where the Chaulukya kings were particularly partial to the faith. The religion was so influential at the Chaulukya court that King Kumārapāla (r. c. 1143–71/72) converted to Jainism before the year 1164. This largely was due to the presence at his court of the great Jain scholar Hemachandra (1088–1172). Although most Chaulukyas were Hindus, their ministers were often Jains. From much earlier times the Jains of Gujarat have dominated (and continue to do so today) the seaborne trade with Africa and Arabia. By controlling the economy these merchant-princes also wielded considerable political power. Being a minority they have always remained conscious of their precarious position in a Hindu-dominated world and have been particularly supportive of their religious and cultural institutions. Buddhists could not survive the Muslim aggression at the end of the twelfth century as could the Jains. Most Jain temples in Rajasthan and Gujarat are the benefactions of Jain nobles and merchants rather than royalty. In 1024 Mahmud demolished the great sun temple of Somnath, Gujarat. Even though Hindu rulers continued to rule the area for almost three more centuries, the temple was never completely rebuilt. Within seven years of its destruction, however, the Jain community was engaged in constructing one of the loveliest temples in all of India

on Mount Abu, where they continued to erect temples well into the thirteenth century. They also built at other sites such as Cambay, Girnar, and Śatruñjaya, to name only a few of the principal sites in Gujarat. They continue to take care of their temples and religious establishments, which house enormous libraries. The inscription on the base of the beautiful marble image of Sarasvati [63], a replacement after the original was destroyed in an accident, attests to the Jain concern for the renovation of their shrines.

The Jain material in the collection includes stone sculptures and elaborate metal altarpieces. A historically significant piece is a brass socle of what must once have been an important image that was found buried in Afghanistan [61]. It is another testimony to the enterprising spirit of the Jain merchant community from Gujarat, members of which probably set up a shrine in twelfth-century Afghanistan, where they were trading.

Most of the collection's stone sculptures from the region once belonged to Hindu temples. Metal images of the period from Uttar and Madhya Pradesh are relatively few. Most surviving examples are made of brass and are of modest size. They are often well worn and no doubt were used in domestic shrines. The Sirpur Buddhist bronze [39] or unusual Surya figure [47] as well as the many Jain bronzes, found mostly in Gujarat [60, 63], demonstrate that the artists of central India were just as skillful as their colleagues elsewhere in creating metal sculptures. Central India and especially the riverine plains of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which were so fertile in producing terra-cotta sculptures through the Gupta period, curiously seem to have lost their interest in the material, except in producing objects for mass consumption. They may have continued to build brick temples, most of which have not survived, but the sculptures adorning them often were carved from stone.

For the history of Hindu temples the importance of the region cannot be overemphasized. Most surviving temples belong today to Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Gujarat, where the Muslim invasions were not as catastrophic as they were in Uttar Pradesh.[2] Although Kanauj became the prize in the contest among the Palas, Pratiharas, and Rashtrakutas, few monuments remain to testify to its glory, when for more than half a millennium it was the capital city of successive dynasties.[3] From literary descriptions we know that during its heyday Kanauj contained lofty temples and palaces as did other cities like Ayodhya, Mathura, and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, to name only a few. During the period erecting stone temples certainly became the prime religious and philanthropic activity of most Hindu monarchs, whether to vaunt their wealth and power or guarantee a smooth passage to and reward in the next life.

Among the most impressive sites, where clusters of temples still stand to announce their past glory, are Baroli, Mount Abu, and Osia, Rajasthan; Khajuraho, Sirpur, and Rajim, Madhya Pradesh; and several in Gujarat. While it is no longer possible to assign the sculptures in the collection to specific temples or sites, at least three examples can be associated with particular shrines. The earliest is a small relief of lively musicians that once belonged to the beautiful Purāṇa Mahādeva temple in Harshagiri, near Sikar, Rajasthan [53]. Another is a fragmentary celestial dancer from a temple at Khajuraho [44]. The third is also a celestial nymph that probably adorned a temple in Ranakpur, Rajasthan [59]. By this period in northern India the creative urge for sculpture had weakened considerably, but it found new inspiration and expression, especially in the Rajasthani kingdom of Mewar, and overflowed into neighboring Gujarat. In both

areas the Jains became particularly active and built many temples, infusing the older style with innovative features. Among these the Ādiśvara or Yugādiśvara temple in Ranakpur, designed by the architect Depāka in 1439, is one of the finest and reflects the continued vitality of both the architects and sculptors in this region.[4]

Building on the foundation of the modest temples of the Gupta period, the architects of central and western India designed and raised some of the most impressive temples that remain today on the Indian subcontinent. The early temples of the period, as in Osia, for instance, are modest structures; by the twelfth century the central and west Indian temples assumed highly complex architectural forms. The more outstanding examples, such as the Khandariya Mahadeva at Khajuraho and Nilkaṇṭheśvara in Udaipur, Madhya Pradesh, or Jain temples on Mount Abu, are not only elaborate conglomerates of several structures, but often their architectural forms are overwhelmed by their sculptural embellishments.

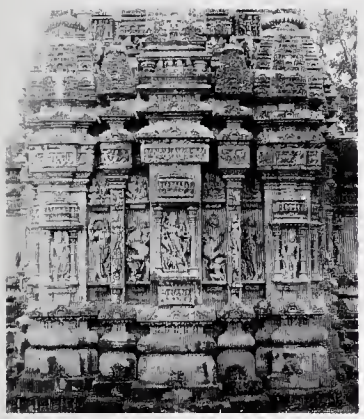
Although the predominant architectural style in the west as in all northern India was the Nagara style, local variations were developed by the architects, and are known variously as Solanki in Gujarat or Māru-Gurjara in Gujarat and Rajasthan. Similarly in sculpture as well, despite local variations, there is an overall stylistic cohesion that easily distinguishes the works from other regional styles, such as those of Kashmir, eastern India, or the Deccan. Within a specific area, however, it is not always easy to identify the numerous local schools, especially when the sculptures are removed from their original context or habitat.

The simplicity and elegance of Gupta-period sculptures are still perceptible in eighth-century sculptures of the region, although the tendency is toward a more baroque expressiveness. The basic aesthetic norms established by their Gupta ancestors remained valid, and figural forms often lack the suave and sensitive modeling of Gupta-period sculptures. The outline is not always smooth and fluid, and the postures, especially of the celestial nymphs (a dominant motif in the temple sculpture of the region), are often contrived and exaggerated with unabashed sensuality, particularly after the tenth century. The restraint of Gupta sculptors now gives way to unbridled exuberance. Although the sculptors continued to emphasize the body unfettered by garments, the forms are often overwhelmed with an abundance of ornamentation just as the temple walls are overburdened with sculptures. Details are carved with astonishing precision, and frequently the designs of the ornaments provide important clues to the regional affiliation of a sculpture. For instance, Surya's scarf, crown, and chains hanging down his thighs as represented in entry 47 are characteristic of sculptures of the region. Similarly the design and patterning of the garments and jewelry as well as some other details of the Sirpur altarpiece [39] are clearly peculiar to the Sirpur area, even though the local sculptors may have absorbed influences from Nalanda to the north or Orissa to the southeast.



Entrance of a Vishnu temple with river goddess reliefs [see 45–46], Singhpur, Madhya Pradesh, c. 900. Photograph by Donald M. Stadtner.

Certain other characteristics may also serve as common denominators of the sculptural style in the region. Because most sculptures were made to embellish temples, their compositions often are determined by their positions on the walls. Often carved in deep relief, the figures are arranged in several receding planes to create an illusion of depth. In sculptures representing celestial nymphs the figures at times seem almost independent of their background. In others the same effect is achieved by making the figures turn and twist from every possible angle as if the sculptors wanted to vaunt their intimate knowledge of the erotic and kinetic possibilities of the feminine form. Whether male or female, human anatomy is rarely represented naturalistically. The surging mass of the torso is generally carried by unusually slim and wobbly legs. There is little indication of muscles and bones,



Back wall of an Ambika temple, Jagat, Rajasthan, 961. Photograph courtesy the American Institute of Indian Studies, Ramnagar, Varanasi.

and surfaces are delicately modulated. Swelling masses, sharply bent joints, contorted postures, and dynamic body torsions distinguish the figural sculptures of these regions. Removed from their temple context, where they often recede among a plethora of bodies, the celestial nymphs or divine dancers lose none of their artistic integrity when viewed in isolation. In some instances, such as the Saiva figure [54], their dramatic quality is enhanced.

In icons meant to adorn niches or subsidiary shrines on temple walls, the composition is dominated by architectonic considerations. Especially from the tenth century the sculptors of the region seem to have crowded their compositions with a large group of figures arranged symmetrically and often in receding planes. They frequently cut away the back slab around the principal figures, thereby diminishing the massed effect, providing areas of light and shadow accentuating the plasticity of the figures. Often the subsidiary figures receive less attention than the principal personages and are not as well modeled. These secondary images seem to conform to a uniform iconographic tradition prevalent over the entire region, although local differences are easily distinguishable as is clear from a comparison of two representations of Siva's family [34, 51].

Regional and local variations are perceptible in other ways too. For instance, images of dancing deities seem to have been particularly popular in central India but less so in Gujarat. Central Indian architects seem also to have been especially fond of adorning their temples with musicians and dancers and of various other genre subjects, such as women at their toilet or playing various games, writing love letters, picking thorns from their feet, and performing various other mundane, physical activities—themes that are equally pervasive in court poetry. Frankly sexual depictions predominate in central Indian sculpture to a much larger degree than in the arts of the northwest, Bihar, Bengal, or southern India. In the east only in Orissan temples does one find such unabashed exaltation of the female form and such varied and sensitive depictions of the feminine mood, even though the figures are presented in a semidivine guise.

By and large the sculptors of central and western India of the period, called on to adorn larger and larger temples, delighted in the iconographic complexity and thematic variety of a structure's sculptural program. The more elaborate their task became, the greater was their predilection for exuberant ornamentation and the display of technical virtuosity. While their Gupta predecessors too celebrated the human body, albeit in divine guise, they were able to achieve a harmonious balance between swelling volume and fluid outline. Their successors were more concerned with rich surface articulation; less naturalistic, although not necessarily less expressive, modeling; more pronounced movement through greater torsions and contortions; and a sense of mannered, dry elegance. Realistic representations were not of primary concern, but the sculptors were not impervious to their surroundings and appear to have been especially influenced by court culture in rendering their themes. Within the constraints of iconography and architecture they remained creative generally through the twelfth century and occasionally, as in Rajasthan, through the fifteenth.

Notes

1. For a general history of the period see Majumdar 1964 and 1966.

2. See P. Brown, *Indian Architecture (Buddhist and Hindu Periods)* (Bombay: Taraporevala, 1976).

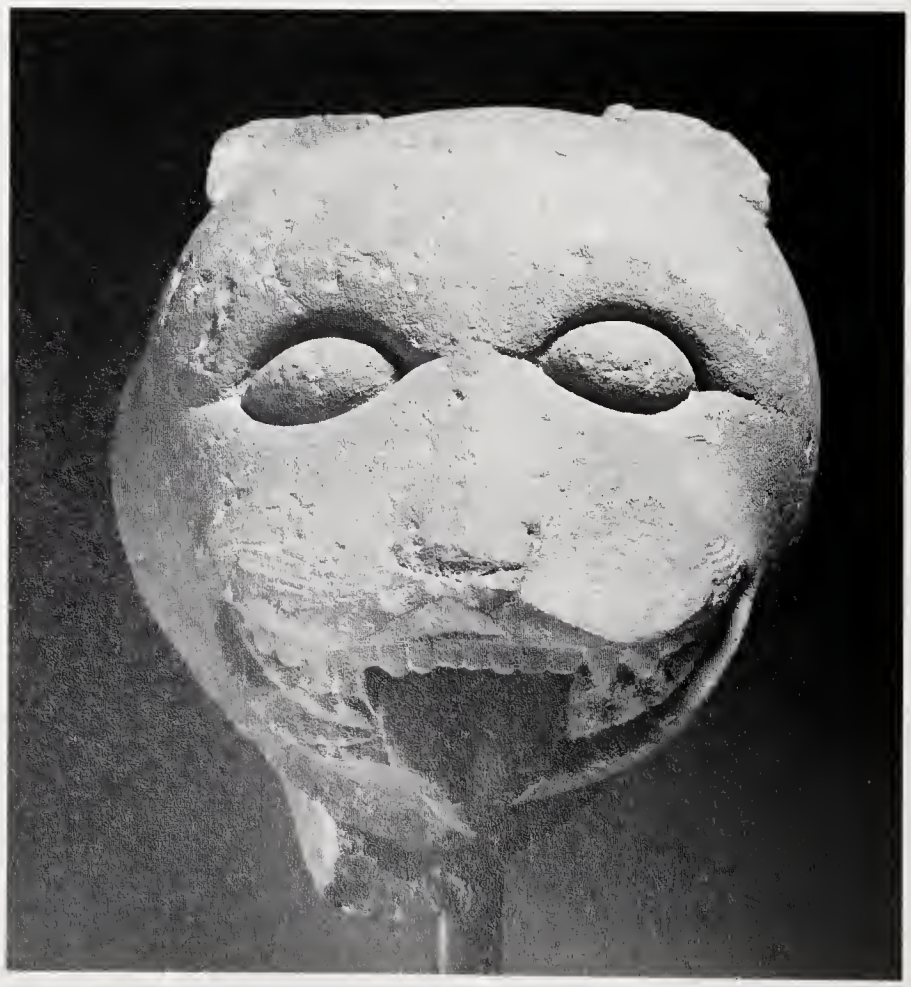
3. See M. M. Mukhopadhyay, *Sculptures of Ganga-Yamuna Valley* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 1984), for a discussion of art produced in the heartland of the Pratihara Kingdom.

4. See A. Ghosh, ed., *Jaina Art and Architecture*, vol. 2 (New Delhi: Bharatiya Jnanpith, 1975), for a survey of Jain temples including those at Ranakpur.

*31 Head of a Lion*
Uttar Pradesh (?); seventh century
Sandstone; 10½ in (26.7 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.84.56.1

This impressive head once belonged to a large heraldic lion that may have been used for a secular or religious building. The modeling is rather simplified with flattened nose, deeply cut eyes, and lightly etched eyebrows. The whiskers are delicately incised, and the teeth are articulately delineated. The tongue hangs out of the gaping mouth. Rather unnaturalistic is the placement of the ears on top of the head.

It is difficult to determine the exact provenance or date of this isolated head. It bears a stylistic resemblance to a fifth-century lion head from Mathura in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay (Chandra 1974, fig. 70).



*32 The Goddess Gauri*
Uttar Pradesh, Almora District; ninth century
Chlorite schist; 16½ in (42.0 cm)
Gift of Jerry Heymann
M.82.226

Flanked by two diminutive, adoring females, the four-armed goddess stands rigidly on a tortoiselike iguana. Near the iguana is an animal that may represent a calf or fawn.

The goddess's lower-right hand displays the gesture of charity, her upper-right arm is broken. In her lower-left hand she holds a *kuṇḍikā* (ascetic's waterpot), and in her upper-left hand a staff surmounted by a crook. The goddess's hair is elegantly matted, and in addition to the usual ornaments she wears an ascetic's belt diagonally across her body. Two flaming, torchlike containers are attached to her semicircular halo, further adorned with the lotus and other foliage.

The figure can be identified as Gauri, a popular form of Parvati, or Uma. The identification is based on the presence of the *godhā* (iguana) as the mount and two containers with fire. The icon encapsulates a popular legend in which Uma once undertook severe austerities, including meditating in midsummer surrounded by the *pañchāgni* (five fires) to lighten her dark complexion. Hence she came to be known as Gauri, Fair One. Appropriately, therefore, she is depicted here with the ascetic hairdo and belt.

Gauri's robust, well-proportioned form gains added plasticity by the removal of the back slab. Nevertheless the figure only gives the illusion of being modeled in the round, for the back, which was not meant to be viewed, is left unfinished. The contours are sensitively rendered with subtle modulations as are such details as the elegant coiffure, delicate garment folds, and a swaying strand of pearls. The sculptor seems to have been less familiar with the animals he had to delineate.



*33 Marriage of Siva and Parvati*
Uttar Pradesh; ninth century
Sandstone; 24½ in (62.2 cm)
Gift of Lee Roth, Woodbury, New York
M.82.231

Watched by a host of divinities, Siva's marriage to Parvati is solemnized by the performance of two symbolic acts essential to a Hindu marriage. The first is the act of the groom's acceptance of the bride by taking her right hand in his as Siva does here. This ritual is known as *pāṇigrahaṇa* (accepting the hand). The other important component of a Hindu marriage ceremony is the *saptapadī* (seven steps), which the couple perform by circumambulating seven times around a fire. Between the bride and groom is the figure of Brahma, the officiating priest, offering oblations in the fire.



Siva's trident and Parvati's mirror are prominently depicted between the heads of the deities. The emblem in Siva's upper-left hand may be a flower. Their sons Ganesa and Kumara curiously are included on either side at the base, and two flying divinities hold a crown at the apex of the stele. This act of coronation rarely is encountered in north Indian representations, nor is its significance clear for Siva is an ascetic groom in the story of his marriage. Eight male deities, two of whom can be easily identified, are depicted in two columns on either side of the primary figures. The figure astride an elephant and holding a thunderbolt in the upper-left corner is Indra, king of the gods. Immediately below him is the wind god Vayu, who holds his scarf above his head. Four others seem to hold pots. Because two of the eight are Indra and Vayu it is possible that the group represents the Dikpala, the eight conventional guardians of the directions. The depiction is a simplified version of the marriage myth, in which hosts of divinities were present at the wedding.

Although the faces are damaged and the carving is not very refined, the two principal figures are well modeled and interact with one another gracefully. The composition differs from most other representations in the arrangement of the subsidiary figures around the bride and groom. Weddings often take place under a bower, which may be reflected in the sculptor's design. The relative simplicity of the relief and a comparison with several other examples (Mukhapadhyay 1967–68, pp. 4–15, figs. 1–5) suggest a ninth-century date for this somewhat unusual representation of the charming Saiva myth.

*34 Siva's Family*
Uttar Pradesh; tenth century
Sandstone; 33¾ in (85.7 cm)
Gift of Harry and Yvonne Lenart
M.75.11
Literature: Pal 1978a, pp. 24–25.

This is one of the finest and best-preserved representations of a type of Saiva image popular across northern India during the Hindu period.

The image originally would have been placed in a subsidiary shrine on the external wall of a Saiva temple and hence the strongly architectonic character of the composition. Although the figures are distributed symmetrically, their placement in receding planes on the stele enhances the liveliness of the composition. The artist considerably reduced the crowded effect by freeing the two principal figures from the background and cutting away the inner edges of the lotus nimbus. The smoothly defined contours of the two central figures attain a greater clarity and plasticity by the sculptor's sensitive modeling.

As in other stele representations of Siva's family [51] Siva is seated on his bull with Uma on his left thigh. He holds in his upper-right hand a broken trident and in his upper-left hand a cot's leg entwined with a snake and adorned with a skull. With his lower hands he expresses his affection for his spouse. His right hand holds the *līlākamala* (lotus of dalliance), and with his left he gently caresses his spouse's breast. Siva's favorite attendant, the skeletal Bhṛiṇgi, dances in front of the bull, and his two sons, the elephant-headed Ganesa and peacock-rider Kumara, sit at either side of the base. Behind them stand two celestial guardians, above whom are two garland bearers, male and female. Along the top, immediately above the garland bearers, two sages sit in adoration. The figures of Brahma (with three visible heads) and Vishnu are added on two projecting brackets. In between is a row of five lingas symbolizing the cosmic nature of Siva. Noteworthy is the profile disposition of the garland bearers and two sages. Apart from the fact that this emphasizes their interaction with the two principal deities, it also introduces a welcome variation to the otherwise strictly frontal presentation.







*35 The God Ganesa*
Uttar Pradesh; tenth or eleventh century
Brass; 3⅝ in (9.2 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.84.223.1

The constant application of unguents has eroded much of the surface of this small figure. Nonetheless some of Ganesa's features, such as his potbelly, elephant head, and battle-ax, are distinguishable [see 22a–b for other emblems]. Ganesa is without his mount, the rat or lion. He is surrounded by an aureole fringed with a broad, stylized flame motif. Very likely the bronze is from the Himalayan region of Uttar Pradesh.



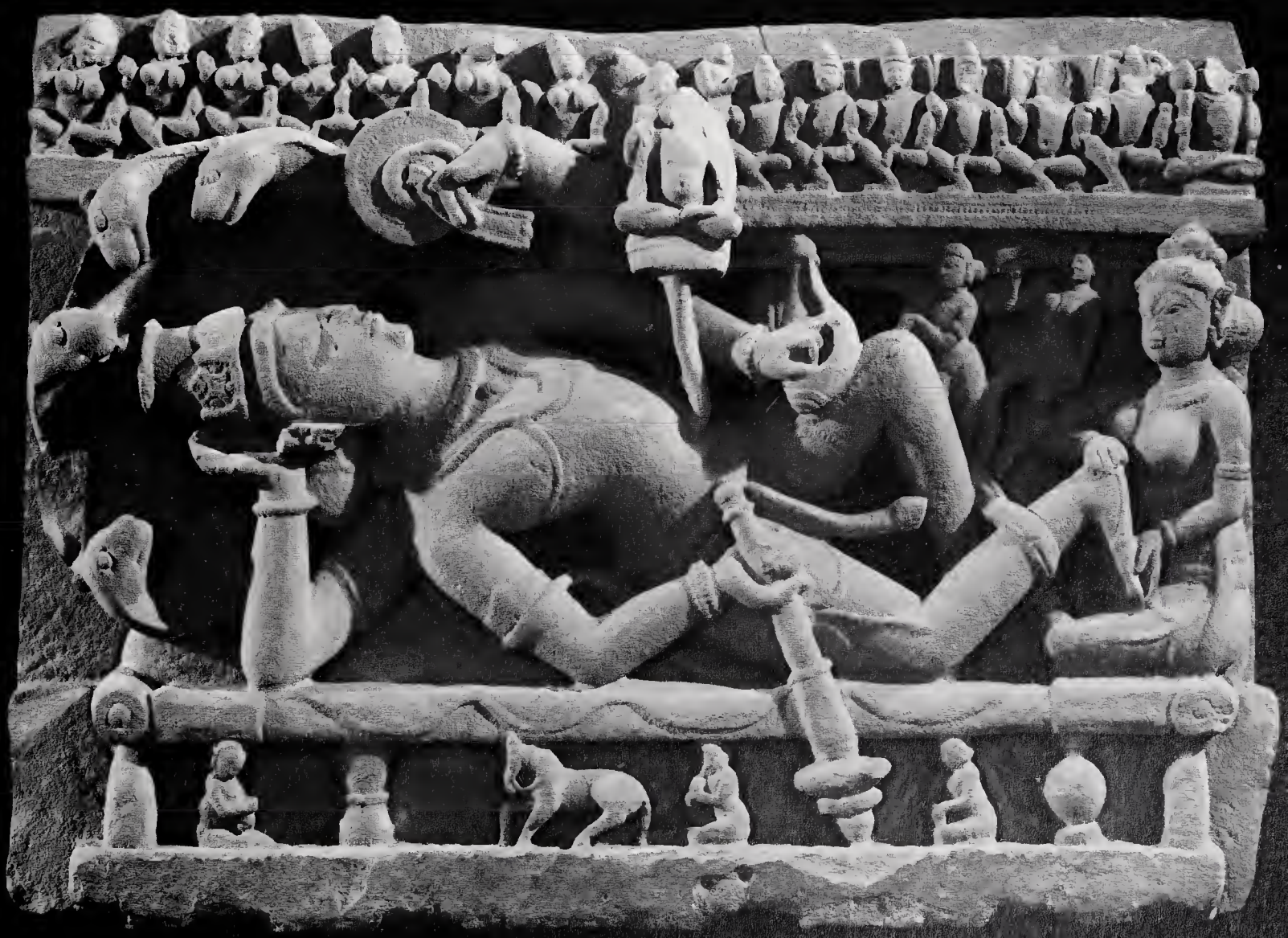
*36 Vishnu in His Cosmic Sleep*
Uttar Pradesh; eleventh century
Sandstone; 22 in (55.9 cm)
Gift of Yvonne and Harry Lenart
M.79.111
Literature: Pal 1978a, p. 14.

His head protected by the five-headed serpent Śesha (Remainder), or Ananta (Eternity), and supported by one of his two right hands, the Hindu god Vishnu is in his cosmic sleep. When he is not active as the preserver of the universe, Vishnu, known as Narayana (One who lives in water), is said to sleep on a serpent in the cosmic ocean.

His other hands hold his attributes, the wheel, conch, and club. His right foot is being massaged by his spouse Lakshmi, while two other attendants hover in the background. From Vishnu's navel rises a lotus on which is seated the now-mutilated figure of Brahma. Along the top of the stele sit to the left the Sapta-matrikas (seven mother goddesses) and to the right the seven planetary deities. Three seated figures, a horse, and two potlike objects are arranged below Vishnu's cot.

The theme is a familiar one in Indian art [132], but this representation displays a few interesting variations. Vishnu normally sleeps directly on the water, but here a cot has been added over which the coils of the serpent seem to be flattened like a sheet. A wavy design representing water is carved behind the various figures along the base. Thus the cot, a realistic representation of the *charpoi* still used in India, presumably is floating in the cosmic ocean. The figures and objects in front may represent what emerged from the ocean when it was churned up with Vishnu's help in another myth. Among them were the goddess Lakshmi, a horse, Dhanvantarī, the divine physician, and a deadly poison as well as the elixir of immortality. Thus the sculptor seems to have made use of two different, yet related myths. The female attendant behind Lakshmi holds a fan, while her male partner exhibits the gesture of adoration.

Although the subject is mythological and involves divine personages, by introducing a few mundane details, such as the cot and fanning servant, the sculptor was perhaps making his theme more comprehensible for the ordinary viewer. He has also represented Vishnu's posture somewhat naturalistically as if he were taking a siesta while his devoted spouse massages his feet. The voids around Vishnu's form provide welcome visual relief to an otherwise crowded composition. The cosmic god further attracts the viewer's attention by the contrast between the sharply angular disposition of his limbs and the horizontal bands of figures above and below him.



37 *A Head of Hanuman*
Uttar Pradesh; twelfth century or later
Sandstone; 15 in (38.0 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.86.338.8

Only the upper part of what must have been an impressive figure of the monkey-god Hanuman remains. The figure once stood against a stela with his right hand raised to the top of his conical crown. The design of the crown can no longer be recognized, but the facial features and curling tail behind the head are still clearly discernible. From what remains—the well-shaped arm and articulate modeling of the cheeks, eyes, and wide, almost grinning mouth—it becomes clear that the figure must have been heroically proportioned and sensitively delineated. With its rolling eyes, the face is particularly expressive.

In the *Ramayana* Hanuman, one of the most important characters, is a supernatural simian general who helps the hero, Rama, rescue his wife, Sita, from the demon-king Ravana of Sri Lanka. In the *Mahabharata* his divinity is made clear when he reveals his cosmic form to his half-brother Bhima, one of the five Pandavas, the protagonists in the story. Both these epics were completed before the fourth century, the *Ramayana* being the earlier. There is no evidence of a Hanuman cult before the Gupta period, although now he is a popular deity all over India. No less a hero than Rama in the *Ramayana,* he is portrayed a heroic figure rather than a stereotyped, mischievous monkey. While once he may have appealed to warriors, his present widespread popularity seems to be because of his role as a remover of obstacles and comparable with Ganesa.

A Brahmi inscription at the back (see Appendix) only praises the god. The paleography, however, indicates a twelfth-century or later date.



*38 A Relief with Mother Goddesses*
Madhya Pradesh; ninth century
Sandstone; 35¼ in (89.5 cm) length
Gift of Paul F. Walter
M.80.157

Reliefs such as this with representations of the Sapta-matrikas, accompanied by Siva and Ganesa, became a popular feature of Saiva temples after the eighth century. Usually placed as a lintel above a side entrance to a temple, they are often well preserved.

Each accompanied by his or her mount, all the figures assume dancing postures as if performing a ballet. Their heads are offset by halos, and each figure is given four arms. The Seven Mother Goddesses are led by Siva in his Virabhadra form, while Ganesa brings up the rear. Each goddess, with the exception of the seventh Mother, can be recognized by her characteristic emblem, borrowed from the god whose energy or power she represents. Following Siva, are Brahmani (who usually leads the Mothers), Mahesvari, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, the boar-headed Varahi, Indrani, the awesome and emaciated Chamunda, and Ganesa.

Basically the sculptor has employed the *lalita* posture for all the figures, although variations have been attempted by shifting the weight to the right foot and slightly modifying the thrust of the hips. The arms, however, are delineated in a wide variety of positions and gestures. Kaumari and Vaishnavi appear more militant as they raise their upper right arms as if to strike. Chamunda displays *tarjanīmudrā* (gesture of admonition) with her upper-left hand. Altogether the group forms a lively composition with a rhythmic movement that flows across the panel.

The style of the figures is closely related to several other sculptures attributed to Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, underscoring the difficulty of suggesting a precise provenance for such sculptures.







*39 A Buddhist Altarpiece*
Madhya Pradesh, Sirpur; c. 800
Bronze inlaid with silver and copper;
15 in (38.0 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.84.32.1a–d
Literature: Dikshit 1955–57, pp. 7–8; Muni Kantisagar 1959; U. P. Shah 1959, fig. 6a; Barrett & Dikshit 1960, p. 22, pl. 56; LACMA 1975, pp. 24, 148, no. 10; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 53; Schroeder 1982, p. 232, fig. 55e; P. Chandra 1985, pp. 126–27; Huntington & Huntington 1985, p. 419, pl. 30; Pal 1985, p. 76, no. 17; Harle 1986, pp. 210, 212, fig. 158.

One of the most frequently published sculptures from the collection, this is the most complex Buddhist bronze to have survived from ancient India. While several such elaborate altarpieces are known in Chinese Buddhist art, Indian examples are relatively few. Cast in several pieces, the bronze is a remarkable tour de force of harmonious composition and luxurious details.

In 1939 a hoard of about sixty Buddhist bronzes were discovered in Sirpur, then widely known for its Hindu temples. Subsequent excavations have revealed the remnants of at least one Buddhist monastery for which the bronzes must have been made. The monastic complex was built probably in the second half of the eighth century, perhaps a little later than the well-known Lakshmaṇa temple at the site (see Dikshit 1955–57; Barrett & Dikshit 1960).

Some of the bronzes have the names Dronaditya and Kumaradeva inscribed prominently on their bases in front. Although these names generally are taken to be those of the sculptors responsible for the bronzes, this is unlikely since rarely did artists sign their names so prominently on artworks. Moreover Dronaditya is a very regal-sounding name and is more likely to belong to a donor rather than a humble sculptor. Whether or not these two names refer to the sculptors or donors, a comparison with the inscribed bronzes clearly reveals that this altarpiece was the handiwork of the same sculptor responsible for those bearing the name Dronaditya. If Dronaditya was indeed the sculptor, then he was fastidious about rich surface textures, achieving his effect with fine incising, delicate chasing, and intricate inlaying with silver, copper, gold, and semiprecious stones. The bronzes may well have been produced in a goldsmith's workshop, for during the excavations several goldsmith's tools were discovered along with some unfinished bronzes.

The principal goddess in this much-admired altarpiece has been consistently identified as Tara, even though her iconography differs fundamentally from all known representations and literary descriptions of the goddess. The most distinctive emblem of Tara is the lotus held in the left hand as is done by both standing figures. There is no indication that the seated goddess once held a lotus. Moreover the lotus-bearing standing goddess on the right has been generally identified as Tara, making it unlikely that the central figure also represents this goddess. A better identification is that she represents Chunda, a deification of an ancient dharani by the same name and generally regarded as a goddess of wisdom. Although her two-handed forms are rare, she can be identified by the fruitlike object in her right hand and two personified serpent adorers who are represented in front of her throne. In many of her representations, especially those from the Nalanda and neighboring undivided Bengal, Chunda holds a fruitlike object with her right hand and displays the gesture of reassurance (see Lohuizen-de Leeuw 1966). The fruit is clearly the citron or lemon filled with *vījapura* (seeds) as the sculptor has attempted to show here. Symbolizing knowledge, it is a prescribed emblem for Chunda at least in one eleventh-century text (see B. Bhattacharyya 1958, pp. 222–23). In most representations from eastern India her throne is supported by a pair of serpent kings, a feature not commonly seen in images of Tara.

Of the two flanking deities, Tara's identification is in no doubt, but the other figure offering jewels and holding a lotus is more difficult to identify. An unusual feature of her iconography is the small stupa adorning her head, which would make her a symbol of the Buddhist religion itself. While some have suggested she represents the goddess Bhṛikuṭī, this is by no means certain. Serpent kings also offer jewels in bowls. The donor of the image kneels devoutly on a small base attached to the stems of the realistically rendered lotus, and containers with offerings and incense are placed below the lions supporting Chunda's lotus throne. The three figures on the upper part of the throne are the transcendental Buddha Amitabha in the center flanked by the bodhisattvas Vajrapāṇi holding the thunderbolt on his right and lotus-bearing Avalokiteshvara on his left. The umbrellas at the top are missing. Very likely the bronze was once gilded.









Most scholars writing about these Sirpur bronzes have vaguely stressed their stylistic affinity with contemporary sculptures from Orissa as well as Nalanda. Specifically, however, the bronze relates to sculptures from Sirpur, nearby Rajim, and Mukhalingam, which is quite a distance east on the shores of the Bay of Bengal. Chunda's throne is very similar in design, including the overhanging carpet, to two stone Buddha images excavated in the Sirpur monastery (Barrett & Dikshit 1960, pls. 52–53). The backs of both Buddhas are supported in an identical fashion with cushions as is the seated Buddha above the goddess Chunda. The decorative design of the throne's crossbar is prominently featured in the Mukhalingesvara temple in Mukhalingam, while equally rich and similar garment designs were favored by the sculptors of the temples of Rajim (Barrett & Dikshit 1960, pls. 13, 60–63). If artists were brought from the better-known centers of Buddhist art in Orissa or Bihar, they were not impervious to local influences.

Scholars disagree about the exact date of this fascinating altarpiece. Comparisons with sculptures in local temples, all of which belong to the seventh or eighth century as well as with contemporary bronzes from Nalanda, make it very unlikely that it could have been made much after the year 800.



40 *Siva as Lord of the Dance*
Madhya Pradesh; c. 800
Sandstone; 29½ in (74.9 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.82.42.4
Literature: Heeramaneck 1979, no. 71.

The feet of this figure originally would have been placed in the same position as is assumed by the goddess Kaumari [41]. Known as the *lalita* posture, it was favored by north Indian sculptors to represent the dancing Siva [see 99]. In this posture the body assumes a somewhat contorted position with the left hip prominently thrust out. Although broken, the principal hands would have formed two gestures: *chinmudrā* (exposition) with the left and *kaṭakamudrā* (flower) with the right. A trident is held in the second right hand, and the broken object in the second left hand was probably a cot's leg. Siva's ascetic nature is emphasized by the third eye, elegantly matted coiffure, animal skin visible on the right thigh, and erect penis. A meandering floral rhizome enlivens the oval halo.

The sculpture stylistically is comparable to the better-known and more complete relief of a dancing Siva found in Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh, generally attributed to the ninth century (Kramrisch 1981, p. 42). In iconography and decorative detailing, however, this representation is simpler. The ornaments are less ostentatious, and the tall, elegant chignon is adorned only with a small crescent rather than a diadem. Siva is calm and introspective, with half-shut eyes, which are different from the fuller, open eyes in south Indian dancing Sivas [138a–b]. Although the figures are animated, the sense of movement is elegantly restrained. A greater contortion is evident in this sculpture because of the diagonal placement of the arm across the body as if to balance the sharp bend of the right leg.





*41 The Goddess Kaumari*
Madhya Pradesh or Rajasthan; 800–850
Sandstone; 28 in (71.1 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.82.42.3
Literature: Heeramaneck 1979, no. 62; Kramrisch 1981, p. 70.

The goddess Kaumari, personification of Kumara's sakti, assumes a classic dance posture as she bends her legs, barely raises her right foot, and prominently thrusts her hip laterally [see entry 38 for a relief of dancing Mother Goddesses]. Both right arms are broken; of the two left hands one delicately displays the gesture of exposition and the other holds the spear that is her distinctive emblem (borrowed from Kumara). The stele is cut away completely immediately behind her to emphasize her shapely form defined by luxuriant curves. Her hand is offset by a lotus halo, and at the bottom are a female attendant holding a flower and a peacock (also borrowed from Kumara), who seems to be dancing with his mistress.

Her head is covered with beautifully delineated curls that continue a style of coiffure popular in Gupta-period sculpture. The goddess has a soft, introspective expression. Her pinched waist accentuates her full breasts and hips, and yet she dances with graceful buoyancy. Although not as voluptuous, she is related to the figures in the river goddess reliefs [45a–b], which may have emerged from a temple in Rajasthan. In both publications cited above the sculpture was attributed to eighth-century Madhya Pradesh. A companion piece from the same series of dancing Mother Goddesses, now in the Richmond Museum, was catalogued as "Central India, circa 1100–50 A.D." (Rosenfield 1966, p. 47).

*42 A Solar Deity (?)*
Madhya Pradesh (?); tenth century
Sandstone; 18 in (45.7 cm)
Gift of Ann and Robert Walzer
M.86.347

The exact provenance and identification of this divine figure are difficult to determine. The disposition of his two lower arms, posture, and half-shut eyes clearly indicate that the deity is engaged in meditation. His upper hands hold flowers; if they are lotuses, he would be a solar deity [see 47]. Neither the fact that he has four arms nor his attire would militate against such an identification. In most later iconographic texts, where Surya is given four arms, only the lotus is prescribed as his attribute. In an image from the sun temple at Konarak, Orissa, the god is without his cuirass and boots and is seated similarly on a lotus but has only two arms (Pandey 1971, p. 22a). Another unusual feature of this figure is his short curly hair, which makes any identification with Surya difficult. Such curly hair usually is given to Buddhas and Jinas but not to Buddhist or Jain gods. In the Hindu pantheon only Lakulisa, the deified Saiva teacher, and Vamana, the dwarf incarnation of Vishnu, are given this hairstyle, but the double lotuses are appropriate for neither. Thus a tentative identification with a hitherto unknown form of the sun god seems probable, or he may also represent a deified, eminent teacher, like Lakulisa.

Apart from his multiple arms, the figure's divinity is also emphasized by the presence of flying angels at the top of the stele. The figures seem somewhat squat, and the modeling and material are quite characteristic of tenth-century sculptures in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Noteworthy is the god's rather expansive lap and disproportionately large feet and hands. The broad lotus petals are also unusual and should provide a clue in tracing the provenance of this intriguing sculpture.



*43 Celestial Nymphs*
Madhya Pradesh; c. 1000
Sandstone; 31¼ in (79.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.74.53
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 53, no. 43; Trabold 1975, p. 19, no. 15; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 96.

One of the expressions used in Sanskrit literature to describe such a female is *alasakanyā* (indolent girl). With her head tilted prominently as if to display her elegant coiffure, the larger figure strikes a languid posture as if slightly bored. Her companion stands in profile with just a glimpse of her swelling breast as if not to detract from the voluptuousness of the larger figure. Defying physical laws, both figures are nonchalantly placed on lotus leaves, which indicate their divinity by emphasizing their delicate and bouyant forms.

The placement of the two figures in receding planes creates pools of darkness between the figures, thereby enhancing their shapely contours and highlighting the plasticity of their forms. Very likely the sculpture served as a corner piece considerably above eye level as is apparent in the diagonal positions of the principal figure's breasts. Part of the capital above the women is carved in the form of a kneeling elephant.





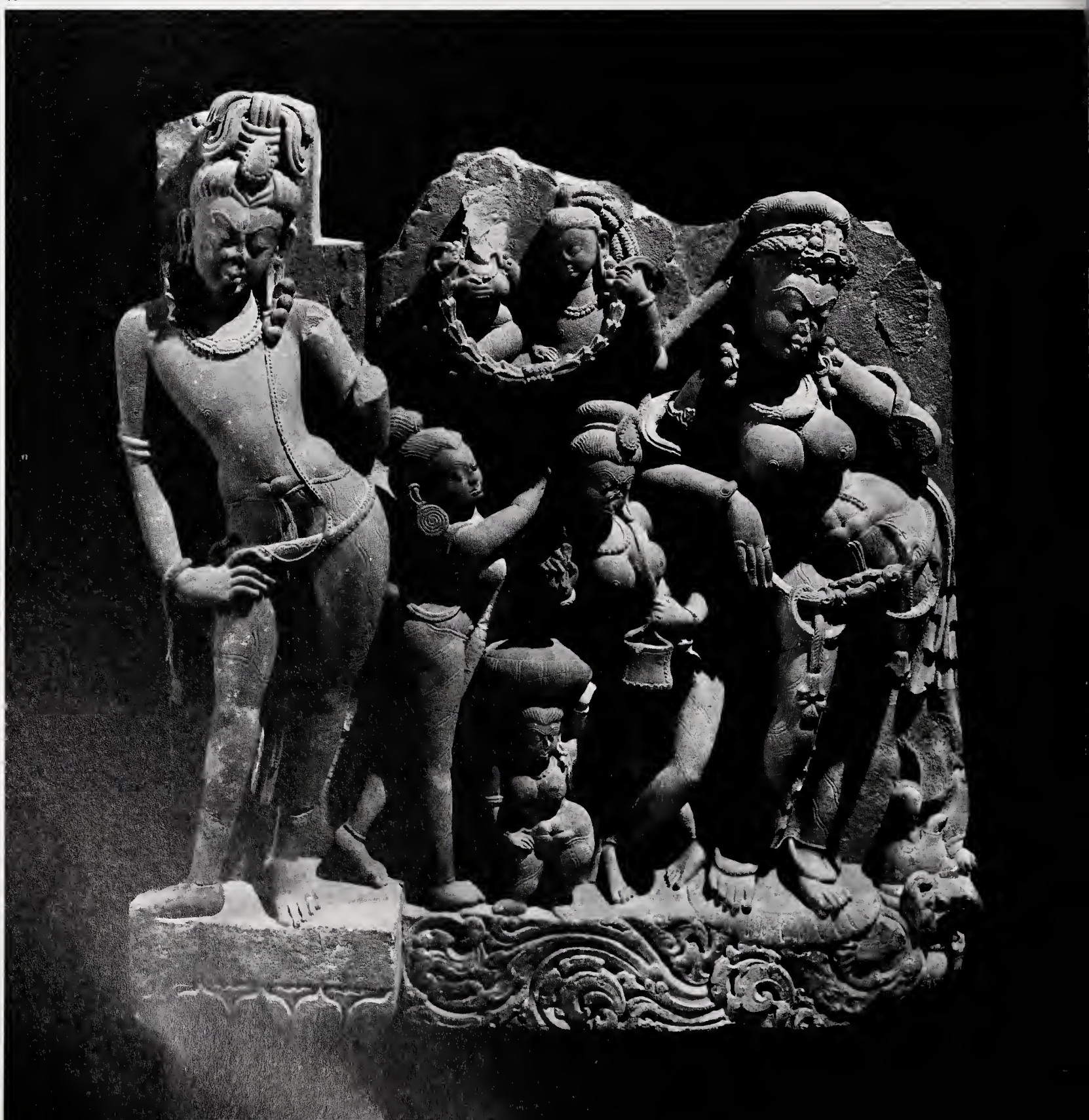
44 *A Celestial Dancer*
Madhya Pradesh, Khajuraho; c. 1100
Sandstone; 31 in (78.7 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart
M.79.57
Literature: Davidson 1968, p. 49, no. 63; Pal 1978a, pp. 38–39, no. 24.

Like several others in the collection [43, 57, 59], this sculpture, representing a celestial nymph under a canopy of mangoes, served as a bracket figure on a temple. Although the legs are completely broken, it can be easily surmised that the figure was dancing. Such celestials became a stock motif of medieval Indian temple decorations, and it has been suggested (Davidson 1968, p. 49) that this sculpture may have once graced the interior of the *maṇḍapa* (ancillary hall) of the Duladeo temple at Khajuraho (see Zannas 1960, pls. CXXXIX–CXL).

Khajuraho today is a favorite Indian tourist attraction where about a score of richly carved temples, built largely during the tenth and eleventh centuries, continue to testify to the glory of the Chandella dynasty. Khajuraho was the capital of the Chandellas, who ruled over an extensive kingdom in the region from the tenth to the early fourteenth centuries. While there is no record of the construction of the Duladeo, a Saiva shrine, it is generally held that the existing temples at Khajuraho were built circa 950–1050. Duladeo sculptures, however, are stylistically so close to those recovered from the ruins of a temple at Jamsot, near Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh, that the same architect and sculptors may have been involved at both sites (see P. Chandra 1970, pls. 333–37). These sculptures are generally dated to the twelfth century. Thus the Duladeo temple at Khajuraho may well have been raised toward the end of the long reign of the Chandella monarch Kīrtivarman (r. c. 1060–1100).

Curiously most Duladeo bracket figures in the temple interior, like those in Jamsot, are provided with mango canopies rather than trees. The fruit is a symbol of fertility and abundance. Characteristic also of both groups of sculptures the figures are almost detached from their background so that they appear from the front to be fully modeled in the round, although the backs are left unfinished. Moreover the rather bloated faces are distinguished by double chins and strongly arched eyebrows. Another noteworthy feature is the sharp definition of the luxurious ornaments, which do not obscure the form.

*45a–b* *Panels with River Goddesses*



*45a–b Panels with River Goddesses*
Rajasthan; c. 800
Sandstone; 27 in (68.6 cm) each
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.79.9.10a–b
Literature: LACMA 1975, pp. 22–23, 147–48, nos. 8–9; Heeramaneck 1979, nos. 64–65. *a* only: Glynn 1972–73, pp. 24–25, pl. x, no. 12; Kramrisch 1981, pp. 92–93, no. 75.

The two male guardian figures indicate that these two reliefs originally were affixed on either side of an entrance to a Saiva temple. The tall chignon of matted hair and clearly marked third eye identify these figures as attendants of Siva, whose attributes they borrow. The emblem-bearing arm of both is broken, but each may have held a flower as another guardian does in a similar relief [46]. While the guardian stands on a lotus pedestal, the river goddesses (the largest of the standing females) stand directly on lotus flowers and are supported by their respective mounts. Ganga's is the makara (a mythical creature combining the forms of an elephant and crocodile) [*a*], and Yamuna's is the tortoise [*b*].

Rather than simply representing the goddesses, the sculptor has created a lively genrelike tableau. Behind each goddess is a group of three females: the nearest carries a bag of cosmetics and a bottle of oil, while another holds the staff of an umbrella, now missing; the third is a dwarf balancing a cushion on her head. Thus the scene may well be interpreted as a royal lady going to the river for a bath. The divinity of



the goddesses is indicated by their mounts and the garland-bearing celestial couple in the clouds above.

Although represented as reliefs, the deep carving creates areas of shadow that highlight the opulent forms. Noteworthy are the makara tails and the tortoise, the luxuriant forms of which create the impression of churning water. The various postures and sinuous curves are unified by an underlying linear rhythm suggesting the rippling surface of the river.

Stylistically they are closely related to sculptures belonging to the Harshat Mātā temple in Abaneri (see Agrawala 1955–56), although the exact provenance of these reliefs is not known. The temple has been dated to the eighth–ninth centuries, and its sculptures are rendered in a style reminiscent of the Gupta period. The reliefs are especially noteworthy for the inclusion of secular themes and literary concepts in a religious guise as in these animated compositions.



*46 Panel with River Goddess*
Rajasthan; ninth century
Red sandstone; 25 in (63.5 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.4
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, pp. 44–45, no. 33; Larson et al. 1980, p. 57, no. 22; van der Marck 1984, p. 120, fig. 11.

The panel is basically similar to the two other river goddess reliefs [45a–b] with a few interesting differences. Whereas the male guardians are slightly taller than the goddesses in the other two reliefs, here Ganga's superiority is readily apparent. Moreover the guardian does not have a third eye, and so the relief may once have graced a non-Saiva temple. As in the other two reliefs Ganga is accompanied by three female attendants, but she uses the dwarf as a support, reminiscent of Gupta-period compositions (Williams 1982, figs. 131, 220). Noteworthy also is the fact that the parasol, missing here, probably consisted of a lotus leaf as was common during the period in Rajasthani temples.



Compared with the two other panels, the figures are not as elegantly modeled. Certainly the proportions seem squatter, comparable with the figures of several temples at Osia (see Handa 1984, pls. 58, 61, 67, 144–48; Viennot 1964, pl. 36b). Noteworthy is the profile rear view of the parasol bearer with her extended stomach. This kind of prominent rear view for this particular figure is encountered in several other circa eighth-century temple reliefs, mostly from Madhya Pradesh (Viennot 1964, pls. 26b, 27a, 28a, 29a, 32, 33b). While in most of these reliefs she holds a cloth parasol, in a relief from Malaha, near Bharatpur, Rajasthan, and another in the Telikā Mandir temple in Gwalior, her umbrella is a lotus leaf with a sinuous stem, to which is attached more foliage. Nevertheless the general stylistic resemblance of the panel to temple sculptures from Osia and Abaneri makes a Rajasthani provenance most likely.





*47 The God Surya*
Rajasthan or Gujarat; ninth century
Bronze inlaid with silver; 11¼ in (28.6 cm)
Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Fund
M.53.11
Literature: Trubner 1950, p. 37, no. 64; Trubner 1954; Barrett 1956–57, p. 45, pl. XI, fig. 13; *Master Bronzes of India* (Chicago: Art Institute, 1965), no. 11; Davidson 1968, p. 61; Pal 1974a, pp. 17, 47, no. 14; Trabold 1975, p. 25, no. 26.

This frequently published bronze image of Surya is one of the earliest acquisitions of the collection and is intriguing for its iconography and style. Usually in most north Indian Surya images the god wears a cuirass and boots [2]. Here, however, while the cuirass is only suggested by the decorated textile band worn on the torso, the feet are unshod as is the practice in southern India [131]. Also the god wears a dhoti rather than trousers. Otherwise he has his customary lotus emblems and tall crown.

When first published the bronze was attributed to Kashmir, but Barrett (1956–57) pointed out that its style and iconography made a Madhya Pradesh or southern Gujarat provenance more likely. The work also shares features with sculptures from Rajasthan. The manner in which the scarf is tied around Surya's shoulders like a cape is fairly common in Surya images from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan as are the designs of the crown and halo. Barrett also compared the facial features and formal elements with those of Jain bronzes recovered from Akota, Gujarat. His primary reason for suggesting Madhya Pradesh or southern Gujarat is their proximity to the Deccan, from where the idea of unshod feet may have been borrowed.

Surya images with unshod feet, although rare, are not altogether unknown in the north. Two eleventh-century Nepali images depict the god with naked feet (Pal & Bhattacharya 1969, p. 12, figs. 2–3), which may follow the iconographic tradition as given in the *Matsyapurāṇa,* a north Indian text probably of the Gupta period. The tradition was also known in Orissa (Pandey 1971, pls. 19, figs. 1, 22a). Thus if Surya images with unshod feet can be found as far north as Nepal, Rajasthan is as likely a place, especially in view of the capelike scarf, as is Madhya Pradesh or Gujarat. A stylistically related bronze Surya in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, is considered to be from western India (Pandey 1971, pl. 18a).



*48 A River Goddess Relief*
Rajasthan; c. 900
Sandstone; 36.5 in (92.7 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.74.5.5
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 49, no. 37; Lanius 1972, p. 81, pl. XLIIIb; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 75.

When first published, the male was identified as Bhairava and the tall female as Parvati. Subsequently Lanius (1972) correctly suggested that, like entries 45–46, this too represents a river goddess panel. From the position of the female dwarf, remains of a foot at the extreme lower right, and comparison with the better-preserved panels, it becomes clear that the missing figure would have represented the river goddess. Her right hand probably would have rested on the head of the dwarf attendant, who looks up at her mistress. The remaining female is certainly a third attendant, who seems to hold a cup in her right hand.

The elegantly swaying male figure is therefore a Saiva guardian who has assumed the iconographic attributes of Siva: four arms, third eye, trident, snake, and skull cup. Although eight guardians of Siva are distinguished in iconographic texts, at temple entrances they are often represented alike. One of the eight, Mahakala, is described as a ferocious figure, expressing his displeasure with an open mouth as does this figure.

Rosenfield (1966) attributed the sculpture to about the tenth century and central India or Rajasthan, while Lanius suggested a Rajasthani provenance and a ninth-century date. Both remarked that this fragment and a partially preserved lintel [49] very possibly belonged to the same temple. To them may also be added at least two others in the collection, a Durga [50] and Siva's family [51]. Apart from the fact that they are all carved from the same stone, they are remarkably similar in their depth of carving, physiognomy, hairstyle, and ornamental and textile patterns as well as vegetal designs. Compare the figure of the guardian with the standing figures in the lintel. Not only are they similarly modeled and garlanded, but two of the standing figures show the same stylish design of the dhoti on the left thigh. The large seated figure in the lintel is astonishingly similar to Siva in the Saiva family relief as are the heads of the bulls. Both figures hold the lotus against their chests almost identically. The simple bracket on which the guardian stands in this panel appears again in the upper section of the Siva family stele [51]. Compare also the sword held by the first standing figure in the lintel with those held by Durga in the stele depicting her combat with Mahishasura [50]. Distinctly alike are the proportions, form, and physiognomy. These comparisons suggest that these four sculptures not only belonged to the same temple but were possibly the work of the same atelier. As Lanius suggested, this relief is comparable with the sculptures in the ninth-century Ghaṭeśvara Mahādeva temple in Baroli and are not quite as flamboyant and linear as the figures from the Harshagiri temple of about 975.



49 *Lintel from a Temple*
Rajasthan; c. 900
Sandstone; 28¾ in (73.0 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck
Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.74.5.6
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, pp. 21, 49, no. 38;
Trabold 1975, p. 18, no. 13; Heeramaneck
1979, no. 74.



The principal figure in this lintel has consistently been misidentified as Kubera, Hindu god of wealth (Rosenfield 1966 and Heeramaneck 1979), or Siva as "wealth giver" (Trabold 1975). Although Kubera generally is considered to be a deity of the Saiva family, the figure is none other than Siva. Apart from the fact that he sits on a bull, he is almost identical to Siva in the Siva family relief [51], except that he holds a bowl in his left hand instead of cupping his spouse's breast. It is quite common to represent Siva on the lintels of a Saiva temple. Very likely a second seated figure would have balanced this figure on the other side of the lintel, thereby representing two of Siva's innumerable manifestations. A small devotee kneels in adoration near the bull, while two celestials offer the god garlands from above.

The three standing figures are identical except for their attributes and animal mounts depicted behind each. The figure in the middle holds a *daṇḍa* (staff) and has the makara as his mount. He must therefore represent Varuna, one of the eight regents of the directions. The figure on his left probably holds a spear and his animal seems to be a goat, which would make him Agni, the fire god. If, however, the animal is a deer and the emblem is simply a standard then he would be Vayu, the wind god. The sword-bearing figure is probably Kubera, who sometimes holds the sword and whose mount is the sheep (Mallmann 1963, p. 134). Across the top are the planetary deities, six of the nine remaining, led by Surya. Except for the sun god, the others are identical, each holding a rosary and pot. Curiously Surya's posture is a survival from Kushan Mathura.

On Siva's left stands a male deity who cannot be identified. Below him is a spirited representation of a cherubic figure riding the mythical *sardula,* who seems to be attacking his own foliated tail, which assumes the form of a highly stylized, rearing serpent. The exact significance of this curious variation of an otherwise common motif is not immediately apparent; it may merely have been the result of the artist's whimsy. Below this composition is yet another *sardula* with an equally curious scrolling tail.



50 *Durga Destroying Mahishasura*
Rajasthan; c. 900
Sandstone; 34 in (86.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.77.19.27
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 46, no. 34; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 56.

This sculpture originally would have been placed in a subsidiary shrine or niche on an external wall of a temple. The tableau represents the duel between Durga and Mahishasura. As befitting a deity she has six arms. The emblems that can be recognized are a quiver of arrows, sword, trident, bell, shield, and bow. Even her mount, the lion, participates in the fight, but the demon uses only a sword.

The struggle is not among equals. In most such representations the goddess dominates the composition and towers over both animals as well as the demon, who is portrayed as a human being whose size is disproportionate to the animals. Thus the emphasis in such depictions is on the symbolic rather than the drama involved in such a combat. Even though the demon seems ready to strike and the lion bites the hindquarter of the dead buffalo, both combatants are serene as they engage one another. The composition nonetheless pulsates with the lively movement of flying arms, swinging motion of the goddess, and contorted posture of the demon.





*51 Siva's Family*
Rajasthan; c. 900
Sandstone; 37¾ in (95.9 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.73.4.12
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 51, no. 40; Trabold 1975, p. 20; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 83.

Although this elaborate representation of a Saiva family group belongs roughly to the same period and iconographic tradition as another in the collection from Uttar Pradesh [35], there are some interesting differences. Apart from the fact that the bull here is shown standing instead of seated, Uma sits in a different posture on Siva's thigh. Rather than looking forward, Siva and Uma turn their heads toward one another and gaze into each other's eyes like two engrossed lovers. Not only do the figures interact, but they express a tender intimacy.

Among other iconographic differences mention should be made of the snake, instead of a cot's leg, held in Siva's upper-left hand. The tiny dancing figure in front does not appear to be the emaciated Bhringi, and in addition to Siva's attendants two female companions of Uma are included. The most prominent difference may be noted along the top, where instead of the five lingas are the Sapta-matrikas with Brahmani occupying the central position.

Apart from the strongly architectonic character of the composition, this relief appears more crowded because of the additional figures. It should be noted further that the leonine *sardula* figures on the sides of the columns have the same forms as those in the lintel [49]. In the better-preserved example on the left the tail has been elaborated into a scrolling, multihooded serpent design exactly as in the other relief. Thus the stylistic relationship of the two becomes further evident.

When first published (Rosenfield 1966), the sculpture was dated to the eleventh–twelfth centuries. In Heeramaneck (1979) it has been dated to the ninth–tenth centuries, and Abaneri has been suggested as the provenance. While the date seems correct, there is no ground to attribute the sculpture to Abaneri specifically.





52 *A Jain Stele*
Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh; early tenth century
Sandstone; 13 in (33.0 cm)
Gift of Paul F. Walter
M.74.106.2
Literature: Pal 1971, pp. 96–97, no. 87.

Besides the large, enthroned figure in the center, four other Jinas and two attendants are depicted in this stele. The presence of the five Jinas makes this a *panchatirthika* shrine. Because the Jinas are not differentiated and their animal emblems are not present, it is not possible to identify each individually. The principal Jina sits on a lion throne and is protected by a parasol held by two elephants. The presence of the elephants may symbolize the lustration of the Jina, who may represent Mahavira, the last and greatest of the twenty-four Jinas. The nakedness of the Jinas indicates the Digambara association of the relief.

What is rather curious about this stele is the varying quality in the delineation of the principal figure, his lion seat, elephants, and six figures surrounding him. While the sculptor was careful in modeling the form and carving every detail, such as the hair, facial features, and overhanging carpet of the larger Jina, he seems to have devoted less attention to the side figures. It is possible that a master sculptor was responsible for the principal Jina and the lion seat, delegating the lateral figures to an apprentice. Note also how clumsy and disoriented is the right arm of the standing Jina on the right.

While the exact provenance of the sculpture cannot be determined, stylistically it is comparable with a somewhat more elaborate relief dated to the tenth century from Madhya Pradesh, now in the Nagpur Museum, Maharashtra (B. C. Bhattacharya 1974, p. VI). The museum's stele is considerably simpler and was possibly carved in the first half of the century.

53 *A Frieze with Musicians*



53 *A Frieze with Musicians*
Rajasthan, Harshagiri; c. 970
Sandstone; 5¾ in (14.6 cm)
Los Angeles County Fund; 72.1
Literature: Pal 1974, pp. 30, 51, no. 30.

This frieze once belonged to the Purana Mahadeva temple designed and constructed by the architect Chaṇḍaśiva for a brahman patron named Allaṭa, as is known from an inscription at the site. The exact date of the temple is not known, but it was certainly completed before the year 973, when the inscription was composed (Lerner 1969). Nothing further is known about either the patron or architect except that the former must have been an important religious figure with access to great material resources. He may well have been the *rājaguru* (family priest) of the Chahamana dynasty, which ruled Sikar at the time. Because it is securely datable and for the fine quality of its sculptures, the Harshagiri temple is a significant Indian monument.

The deeply cut figures in this frieze depict a group of musicians that include three flute players (two of whom are seen from the back), a man playing a stringed instrument (perhaps a vina), and a singer. The vocalist is the third person from the right with his left hand raised to his ear. On his left a female holds in her right hand a flask, very likely containing wine. The two men at the far left hold drinking cups. Thus the scene probably represents a convivial soiree.

Music and dancing seem to have played an important role in the artistic repertoire of Harshagiri, and several other lively panels are now in various museums (see Lerner 1969). As Lerner has pointed out these celestial musicians are probably engaged in praising Siva, presiding god of the temple at Harshagiri, Hill of Joy.



*54 The Androgynous Form of Siva and Parvati*
Rajasthan; eleventh century
Schist; 24¾ in (62.9 cm)
Ancient Art Council Fund and Indian Art Special Purpose Fund
M.87.107

Carved completely in the round, although the back is not as detailed as the front, the imposing principal figure is androgynous. Known as Ardhanārīśvara (Half-woman, half-lord), the right half of such figures always depicts the male Siva and the left half the female Parvati. On the left is the female breast, although curiously the shoulder is broader on the left than on the right. The sculptor also has modeled the outline of the torso, waistline, and hips differently in the two halves. Also noteworthy are the different hairstyles, ear ornaments (a snake for Siva), and garments. Siva's thigh is draped with an animal skin, while his forehead is adorned with the vertical third eye and his matted hair with a snake that slithers from the crown of the head. That each half is given only one arm is rather unusual. While Siva's raised hand holds a trident, Parvati's arm hangs down to hold a lotus.

Each is provided with two companions who stand swaying and are positioned in receding planes in contrast to the strictly frontal stance of the androgynous deity. On Siva's side the figure in front, holding a cup and probably a cot's leg, is male while his companion is female. On the other side Parvati's spear-bearing bodyguard in front is female with a male bringing up the rear. Such juxtaposition of attendant couples is rather unusual. The sculptor or theologian responsible for the iconography scrupulously observed a strict equality between Siva and Parvati or male and female. The kneeling donors too are of equal size, where generally the female is shown somewhat smaller.

While most Rajasthani sculptures in the collection were carved from either red-pink sandstone or marble, this and a second example [56] were executed in a black stone, not uncommon in the region. Several features, such as the design of the nimbus and hairstyle of the women, are characteristic of Rajasthani sculptures of the period. It is certainly earlier than an elaborate black stone shrine of Vishnu dedicated in 1204 (Hayward Gallery 1982, p. 197, no. 345), now in the National Museum, New Delhi.



55 *A Saiva Deity*
Rajasthan; 1000–1025
Sandstone; 31 in (78.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Gift of the Michael J. Connell Foundation
M.74.5.4
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, pp. 53–54, no. 43; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 91.

This is one of the most enigmatic and dramatic sculptures in the collection. When first published (Rosenfield 1966) the six-armed figure was identified as Bhairava, but the somewhat peculiar position of the god was not discussed. Heeramaneck (1979) suggested that "he is standing with his right leg in *plié* position" and that "this dance pose is called the Lalita." A comparison with two earlier dancing Sivas [38, 40] makes apparent the improbability of either suggestion. Neither the position of the legs or arms allow for such an interpretation. Rosenfield's identification of the figure as Bhairava was probably based on the appearance of the garland of skulls, but this too is insufficient. Moreover Bhairava generally is depicted as a naked ascetic, whereas this figure is clothed and richly adorned. The rosary is also an unusual emblem for Bhairava as is the sacred cord.

That the figure represents Siva may be reasonably surmised from the six arms, rosary, and skull garland. Very likely the figure was seated, supporting himself with his left arm. The posture is rather ambiguous in the present condition of the figure. In addition to the skull garland, the armlet is adorned with a *kīrttimukha* (face of glory), which also serves as the pendant in the elaborate makara necklace hanging below the chest.

Whatever its exact identification, the sculpture is forceful and dynamic. Although the figure is profusely ornamented, the plastic qualities of the form are not obscured. Removed from its original location and without its additional arms, the figure is remarkably buoyant and appears to float. Comparing the ornaments with those in the Duladeo temple figures at Khajuraho [44], Rosenfield had suggested a date in the first half of the twelfth century for this sculpture. Closer parallels, however, are provided by temples at Osia, especially Vishnu temples 4–5, which were built probably in the first quarter of the eleventh century (see Handa 1984, pls. 47–48, 51, 55, 66).



56 *A Cosmic Form of Vishnu*
Rajasthan or Gujarat; twelfth century
Stone; 29¾ in (75.6 cm)
Gift of Gary Crawford
M.83.248.1



Seated on his flying Garuda, Vishnu is represented in the unusual *viśvarūpa* (cosmic, or universal, form). While most of the figure's iconography agrees with known textual descriptions, there are some significant differences. For instance, in this form Vishnu generally is to be portrayed with twenty arms and four placid heads, human, demonic, porcine, and leonine. Here, however, all three heads of the god are human (the fourth presumably is meant to be at the back) and he is given fourteen arms. Most of the recognizable attributes are those prescribed for Visvarupa Vishnu. Apart from the usual conch, lotus, club, and wheel, there are the sword and shield, noose, bow (now broken) and arrows, lemon, pot, and gesture of charity.

More interesting, however, is the gesture formed against the chest by the two principal hands. The texts prescribe that two of the hands should display the *yogamudrạ* (yogic gesture), which is the same as the *dhyanamudra* (meditation gesture). Here the gesture is a combination of exposition or wisdom (right hand) and meditation (left hand). While not inappropriate, this combined gesture is unusual for Vishnu and is usually given to Lakulisa, a manifestation of Siva, and the Buddha. It should be noted, however, that in the famous Nara-Narayana relief of the Gupta-period Deogarh temple, Narayana, a yogic manifestation of Vishnu, displays against his chest the gesture of exposition (Huntington & Huntington 1985, p. 210, fig. 10.30). The gesture could well have been adopted by the sculptor from an image of the Buddha, who is an avatar of Vishnu.

In western India there was a tradition of representing Visvarupa Vishnu with human rather than animal heads as in an image from Samlaji, now in the National Museum, New Delhi (Harle 1986, p. 146, fig. 111). This sculpture continues that tradition and was very likely created for a Vaishnava temple in areas of Rajasthan or Gujarat not far from Samlaji. This type of black or dark gray stone is quite common in the region.

57 *A Column with Celestial Nymphs*
Rajasthan; thirteenth century
Limestone; 24 in (61.0 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.83.250

Although somewhat abraded, this is a typical example of a corner column from a temple rendered in the style of figures adorning the temples on Mount Abu. Slim, full-bodied figures, these celestial nymphs are portrayed as nimble dancers striking poses from the repertoire of classical Indian dance. The style of this fragmentary column and better-preserved marble bracket figure [58] is comparable to the thirteenth-century Luna Vasahi temple sculptures (Huntington & Huntington 1985, p. 495, figs. 20, 56) and those of the Neminath temple of 1234 (Zimmer [1960] 1966, 2: pls. 392–93), both on Mount Abu.

This column is unusual for its style and material. Although limestone is a familiar material in Rajasthan and Gujarat (see Newmann 1984, p. 53), it was not a favorite stone for architecture or sculpture.



*58 A Ribald Scene*
Rajasthan; thirteenth century or later
Marble; 30⅜ in (77.2 cm)
The Phil Berg Collection
M.71.73.132
Literature: Berg 1971, pp. 88–89, no. 138.



This sculpture was once used as a decorative bracket figure placed atop a column in the assembly hall of a Jain temple. The marble is not as highly polished as that of the Sarasvati [63], perhaps because the figure would have been placed high above the viewer's eye, but details are rendered with precision. As was customary in Rajasthani temples of the period, the bracket is designed in the shape of a lotus bud. The thirteenth-century Mount Abu attribution in Berg 1971 is possible, although a later temple of some other location is more likely. The female figure, with its strong angularity, somewhat stiff posture, as well as the shape and features of the face and design of the crown, considerably differs from similar figures in the thirteenth-century Mount Abu temples.

Whatever the exact provenance of the sculpture, it presents an interesting and somewhat droll subject. In contrast to the diminutive male the female appears as an amazon. She obviously is attempting to dissuade the eager male, who is reaching out either for her breast or the horn she has raised above her head. This may be a drinking horn or cornucopia symbolizing abundance. The erotic nature of the work is further symbolized by the monkey grasping at a ripe fruit, probably a mango, just as the male may be reaching for the woman's breast.



59 *A Celestial Nymph*
Rajasthan, Ranakpur (?); c. 1440
Marble; 44¼ in (112.4 cm)
Gift of the Ahmanson Foundation
M.80.62
Literature: Newmann 1984, pp. 45, 54, fig. 49; Pal 1985, pp. 75–76, fig. 16.

This impressive sculpture, carved from white marble with gray-black streaks, once served an architectural function, probably in a Jain temple. The texture and color of the stone differ considerably from the marble used in other sculptures from the region [58, 63]. Striking a contorted, unnaturalistic pose, the lady appears to hold a disk of the same shape as her earrings. Because she is freed from the background, the angularity and plasticity of her form is strongly emphasized. The unknown sculptor has ingeniously taken advantage of the natural streaks and swirls of the material to add an interesting texture to the surface.

Although the sculpture has previously been attributed to the thirteenth century, its stylistic parallels may be seen in the Ranakpur temple. Apart from the fact that several almost identical figures similarly holding disks adorn the exterior walls of this temple, some decorative motifs, such as the half lotus, face of glory, chain with bell, and knotted scarf around the leg, frequently are used in this and other sculptures in the Ranakpur temple (Ghosh 1975, 2: pls. 240–43).

60 *A Jain Altarpiece*
Gujarat, Broach; 988
Gilt copper inlaid with silver
and semiprecious stone; 14½ in (36.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. J. J. Klejman
M.71.26.38
Literature: Shah 1955–56, pp. 60, 64, pl. XIII, fig. 10; Shah 1959, p. 54, pl. 77c; Pal 1975b, 3: 551–52, pls. 329b, 330.



Although not quite as elaborate as the Sirpur altarpiece [39], this is a fine example of the type of luxuriously assembled altarpieces that the Jains were fond of dedicating to their temples. Except for one figure, the altarpiece is complete.

The altarpiece is important for its quality and the historical information it provides in a dedicatory inscription at the back. According to the inscription, it was dedicated by Pārśvillagaṇi in the shrine known as Mūlavasati in Bhṛigukachchha in the year 988. Pārśvillagaṇi was the pupil or disciple of the guru Śīlabhadragaṇi, who apparently was a spiritual successor of Lakshmaṇasurī of the Nāgendra (Lord of serpent) lineage and is described as a man of "extremely peaceful nature." Pārśvillagaṇi is the ancient name of the modern town of Broach. Usually such altarpieces with three Jinas are known as *tritīrthika* images. Since the Jinas are clothed, Pārśvillagaṇi was a Svetambara Jain.

The meditating, enthroned central figure, protected by an elaborate multihooded serpent, is Jina Parsvanatha, which is not surprising since Parsva is part of the donor's name. Below his lion throne is a wheel flanked by a pair of deer. In Buddhist images these motifs signify the first sermon at Sarnath.





Although the wheel representing truth or dharma is common to Jains and Buddhists, the Jains borrowed from the Buddhists the combined motif as a symbol of a great teacher. The two upright, flanking Jinas cannot be precisely identified without their emblems. These two Jinas are flanked by two of the Sixteen Vidyādevīs, "goddesses of wisdom." On Parsva's right is the goddess Chakreśvarī, holding two lotuses and a chakra (wheel); the other figure is Vairoṭya or Vairoṭi, who holds two snakes, shield, and sword. The seated lady with a child and bunch of mangoes is the yakshi Ambika [126]. The corresponding figure on the other side has been lost but would have depicted the yaksha Dharanendra. Along the platform supporting the lion throne are nine heads representing the nine planets. Two divine garland bearers are added above on either side of the serpent canopy, and as is customary in Jain images a triple parasol shields each Jina.

The altarpiece is a tour de force of exquisite chasing and decorative design. The exuberance of the aureoles, nimbuses, vegetal forms, and snake hoods does not obscure the clarity of the figural forms. Nevertheless the sculptor obviously delighted in rich surface textures as is clear not only from the chasing but also from the unusual use of stone inlay in the cushion, lotus, carpet on the throne, auspicious marks on the chests, and eyes.

*61 A Socle of a Jain Image*
Gujarat; twelfth century
Brass with color and inlaid with silver and copper;
11¾ in (29.8 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by Dr. and Mrs. Alston Callahan
M.86.299.2



This impressive base was discovered in Afghanistan but was certainly made in Gujarat, evident by a comparison of the object with Jain bronzes found and made in Gujarat and specially from the form, attire, and style of the two standing males and seated goddess. She is stylistically akin to the dated Sarasvati [63]. Moreover the architecturally conceived base reflects the prevalent architectural style of Gujarat rather than Afghanistan. Very likely therefore the image was made for Jain merchants from Gujarat who were trading with Afghanistan.

While the front of the socle is conceived as a structure rising from a lotus base with receding walls and sloping roofs, as encountered in the assembly halls of contemporary temples, the back is semicircular. Interestingly the voids around the figures in front provide them with bold relief and emphasize the plasticity of their forms. The lions and elephants are particularly well modeled and remarkably lively. The two elegant males with flywhisks resting unusually against their hands, joined in the gesture of respect, stand on separate lotuses extending from the base, giving the illusion that the work was conceived in the round. Their backs, however, are unfinished, and they are supported by casting flues. The figures are finely modeled, and the details have been chased with much care and precision. Noteworthy is the thin copper overlay on some lotus petals at the top of the socle; also the eyes of the two flywhisk bearers are inlaid with silver.

These two figures may represent the donors, although in Jain bronzes flywhisks generally are held by semidivine attendants rather than by mortals [see 60]. Moreover their unusual hairstyle [see 52] may indicate that they represent religious personages rather than lay figures. The goddess in the central niche is Sarasvati [63], who holds two lotuses with her upper hands and a rosary and book with her lower hands. The emblems below are much effaced but may represent a pair of confronting geese enclosed by a vine or rhizome as seen in the hands of the stone Sarasvati. The inclusion of Sarasvati is unusual but not altogether unknown. Apparently the inscription on a Sarasvati image in the British Museum describes the goddess as the sixth Jina, "the protectress (*śāśanadevatā*) of Padmaprabha" (Shah 1941, p. 212). Thus it is highly likely that the missing Jina was Padmaprabha.

62 *A Jain Altarpiece*
By Mahipati
Gujarat; 1121
Copper alloy; 13 in (33.0 cm)
Gift of Paul F. Walter
M.75.90
Literature: Pal 1971, pp. 97–98, no. 89; Pal 1975b, 3: 553, pl. 332.



The inscription on the back informs us that this image was commissioned in the year 1120 (not 1020 as given in literature above) by the merchant Kuṇḍhā and his son Sāntana for the "destruction of [fruits of] actions [karma]." Since all three Jinas are naked, it may be further postulated that the family were members of the Digambara sect. The sculptor responsible for the work was Mahīpati, about whom nothing is known.

The central figure of the triad represents Jina Santinatha. Although the animal emblem below him is difficult to identify, very likely it is a deer, Santinatha's animal cognizant. The curled, snaillike object below the Jina on the right is a conch, which identifies the figure as Neminatha. If the animal below the third figure is a buffalo, then that Jina must be Vāsupūjiya. Each figure is protected by a triple parasol surmounted by a seated figure in the center and is flanked by two auspicious waterpots. A large waterpot serves as the crowning finial above the central aureole. The seated figure above Santinatha's parasol, also an auspicious symbol, may be playing a drum. In addition to the garland bearers and effigies of the Jina and his spouse, two elephants are shown lustrating the central Jina [see 50]. Further above are two geese symbolizing supreme knowledge, while along the side of the shrine are the usual makara brackets and *gajaśārdūla* motif.

Although not as sumptuous as the earlier altarpiece, this example is an elaborate work of good craftsmanship. Mahipati conceived his Jinas as strongly geometric figures; note their disproportionately large hands. In contrast to these columnar figures, the others whether human or animal, are rendered with greater animation, which contributes to the liveliness of this otherwise hieratic composition.

63 *The Goddess Sarasvati* *Color plate, p. 34*

63 *The Goddess Sarasvati*

By Jagadeva
Gujarat; 1153
Marble; 47¼ in (120.0 cm)
Gift of Anna Bing Arnold
M.86.83

Historically as well as aesthetically this is one of the most significant sculptures in the museum's collection. The inscription along the base (see Appendix) states that in April–May 1069 an image of the goddess Sarasvati was installed by the minister Śrī-Sanmukha, son of Śrī-Varaṇāga. In February–March 1152 that sculpture was damaged accidentally. In 1153 the officer Paraṣurama replaced the damaged figure with this image shaped by the sculptor Jagadeva. Parasurama may have been a descendant of the original donor or simply a motivated Jain dignitary. The original image must have been especially sacred for it to have been replaced. The image was consecrated by the Svetambara Jain pontiff Evaṃdevāchārya and was installed by Paṇḍit (pundit) Dhīmā.

Elegantly poised and proportioned, sensuous, yet dignified, Sarasvati originally had four arms. In each of her two upper hands she delicately holds a pair of pecking geese, which are enclosed by encircling tendrils. In her upper-left hand she also holds a rosary. The two broken hands would have displayed the gesture of charity on the right and held a book on the left. Two flying garland bearers flank the halo, while two musicians are carved on either side at the level of the goddess's thighs. A pair of female attendants fan her with flywhisks, and a devotee with broken arms sits near her right foot. On the other side is the headless gander, Sarasvati's mount.

Very likely this replacement is a fairly accurate copy. Rather unusual is the repetition of the geese as emblems in Sarasvati's hands. While it is not uncommon for the Jain Sarasvati to hold two lotuses or rings of lotus tendrils, rarely do the tendrils enclose pecking geese as emblems (Shah 1941, fig. 2). A pair of geese, however, may be present below her image as is seen in a socle [61]. The birds probably represent *kalahaṁsa* (melodious geese), which not only signify a particular type of meter in Sanskrit poetry but also symbolize wisdom and liberation (Vogel 1962).

Although this sculpture is said to have come from Gujarat, it bears close stylistic resemblance to several other twelfth-century Sarasvati images from Rajasthan. Specific mention may be made of the twelfth-century marble Sarasvati from Pallu near Bikaner, Rajasthan, now in the National Museum, New Delhi (Gupta 1985, p. 43, no. 50). Marble was also favored by architects in Gujarat especially for Jain temples and images.







64 *A Jain Altarpiece*
Gujarat; 1430
Copper alloy inlaid with silver; 6½ in (16.5 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim
M.67.72.17
Literature: Glynn 1972, fig. 12; Pal 1974a, p. 25, no. 25; Pal 1975b, p. 553, pl. 333.

According to the inscription on the back of this altarpiece, this bronze image of Vimalanātha was commissioned by Mahattara Mala and his family and was dedicated by the teacher Somasundarasuri in the year 1430. The donors were Svetambara Jains. Although only Vimalanatha is named, the inclusion of four other Jinas, standing on either side and seated at shoulder level, makes this a *panchatirthika* image. Even if the inscription had not named the central Jina, he could have been identified by the boar emblem lightly etched on the overhanging carpet between the lions. On either side of the throne are seated his attendant deities, while a third figure, perhaps of his protective goddess, is included below the throne [see 63]. Rather unusual are the two flywhisk bearers, who also hold waterpots. As is customary in such Jain altarpieces, two elephants lustrate the Jina from above [52, 61]. Also nine heads representing the nine planetary deities are included on the upper level of the base.

Although the modeling retains vestiges of plasticity still apparent in twelfth-century sculpture, generally the treatment of forms and salient details is perfunctory. Note how carelessly the eyes have been inlaid with silver. This and the following altarpiece are quite typical of countless such images dedicated by pious Jains in Gujarat and Rajasthan during the period.



65 *An Altarpiece with Twenty-Four Jinas*
Gujarat; 1464
Brass inlaid with silver and copper; 12½ in (31.7 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim
M.70.42.11
Literature: Pal 1975b, p. 553, pl. 334.



The inscription on the back this altarpiece informs us that this image (called a *paṭṭa*) of the twenty-four Jinas led by Śāntinātha was commissioned by the merchant Dharma and his relatives. The family was of the Srīmālī caste and residents of Raṇāsaṇa, which cannot be identified precisely. The altarpiece was dedicated by the monk-teacher Suvihata-Suri. Stylized effigies of the donor and his spouse, Dharmādevī, are added at either end of the base.

As is usual in such Jain images of the period, the figures are arranged in a severely geometric configuration. Moreover their diminutive size and summary modeling make the altarpiece an almost abstract composition. Squares and angles rather than spheres and convex shapes characterize the figural forms, and details are so impressionistically sketched as to be scarcely recognizable. Apart from his much larger size, the central figure's eminence is further augmented by his silver-inlaid eyes and auspicious mark on the chest as well as his silver-and-copper-inlaid cushion. Rather unusually the celestial garland bearers are placed among the row of figures, which include the attendant deities and two musicians on either side of the lion throne.



66 *Head of a Goddess*
Gujarat (?); sixteenth century (?)
Brass; 4¾ in (12.1 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.75.4.2
Literature: Pal 1966, p. 70, no. 61.

When first published in 1966 (see literature above), this solidly cast brass head was attributed to "perhaps Kashmir," but no date was suggested. Comparisons were made with masklike processional plaques commonly used in Himachal Pradesh [29], but nothing similar either stylistically or technically is known from that region. A clue to its provenance is provided by a stylistically similar stone head from Gujarat, now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (Harle & Topsfield 1987, pp. 50–51, no. 60).

The function of the crowned head is a little easier to determine. Although it seems complete from the front, it is flat at the back. Very likely it served as a head in an image made of some other material, such as wood. It was not uncommon to make composite figures using various materials as in a collage. Metal images, for instance, are given heads carved of crystal.





67 *Krishna and Radha*
Gujarat or Rajasthan; seventeenth century
Brass; Krishna: 10⅜ in (26.3 cm);
Radha: 5½ in (13.9 cm)
Gift of Myrna Smoot and Peter Smoor
M.84.228.3a–b

This disproportionate couple represents the Hindu god Krishna and his spouse, Radha. Although they are primarily Hindu deities, they are also worshiped by the Jains, especially in Gujarat and Rajasthan.

Krishna here is represented as Govardhanadhari, uplifter of Mount Govardhana in Brindavan, Uttar Pradesh. In a popular story of Krishna's life it is recounted how during a fierce storm let loose by the Vedic god Indra, Krishna upheld the mountain with one hand and gave shelter to animals and humans. This is the form of Krishna that is adored by the Vallabhāchārya sect of Vishnuism, which is extremely popular in Rajasthan and Gujarat.

Very likely these images once graced a domestic shrine and would have been clothed. Rendered in a folk style with columnar bodies and limbs modeled perfunctorily, the bronzes nevertheless echo the geometric configuration apparent in the earlier Jain bronzes [64–65]. Noteworthy are the broad faces dominated by wide, staring eyes. Radha obviously has received more attention during worship as her features are much more effaced. (For a stylistically related but earlier Krishna see Gorakshakar et al. 1987, p. 56, no. 28.)

# Eastern India

# Introduction

For the purpose of this catalogue eastern India is considered to comprise the modern states of Bihar, West Bengal, and Orissa in India and the country of Bangladesh.[1] The easternmost region of the subcontinent, known once as Assam, is today divided into several states, but no work of art from the area is included in the collection. Western Bengal and Bangladesh will be referred to as Bengal, the traditional name of this Bengali-speaking region. While some works of art can with certainty be attributed to Bangladesh, others are less easy to assign to a specific area.

It also is difficult to distinguish between sculptures created in Bihar and Bengal, for the similar dark stone was popular in both regions. Often called basalt, the stone is usually a schist or phyllite and lends itself to crisp carving and high polish. Although similar black stone is encountered in other parts of the subcontinent [55], the stone was popular among sculptors in Bihar and Bengal. In Orissa the most common stone is a coarse-grained red-brown gneissic rock that is quite distinct from the stone used in central and eastern India, but the trap extends down the coast to neighboring Andhra Pradesh. Not only is this stone more susceptible to weathering, but it is less responsive to intricate and detailed carving as is the harder or finely grained schist or phyllite of Bihar and Bengal. Because of the very distinct appearance and nature of the rock Orissan stone sculptures are easily distinguished from those produced in Bihar and Bengal.

The second important medium for sculpture in this region was metal. Compared with central India, enormous quantities of metal sculptures have survived from Bihar and Bengal. From antiquity Bihar has remained a rich source for metal, and therefore it is not surprising that copper would have been a popular material. Bihar has yielded several hoards of bronzes, the earliest examples possibly dating to the first century B.C. if not earlier. Discovered at Chausa, Bihar, this early hoard contains only Jain bronzes. The two most important hoards in Bihar during the period were found at the Buddhist monastic sites of Nalanda and Kurkihar, both of which appear to have been prolific centers of bronze casting. Although bronze images must have been made in large numbers in Bihar in earlier periods and some have survived, the bronzes discovered in both Nalanda and Kurkihar as well as in Bengal and Orissa do not antedate the seventh century.[2] Thereafter bronzes continued to be produced in prolific numbers in Bihar and Bengal at least through the twelfth century for Hindus and Buddhists. The influence of Jainism in eastern



Ruins of the Great Stupa, Paharpur, Bangladesh, eighth century. Photograph by Sadashiv Gorakshkar.

India, once the cradle of the faith, began to wane during the period, and fewer Jain bronzes have survived. It is curious, however, that Hindu bronzes from the period after the thirteenth century are so few. Was the bronze industry so closely tied with Buddhist religious establishments that once these were destroyed in the twelfth century, the workshops too disappeared? The spread of Islam especially in Bengal may also have been a contributory factor as it was in Kashmir.

In Bengal the most important center of Buddhism was the monastic establishment known as Somapuri Mahavihara, the ruins of which have been discovered in Paharpur, Bangladesh. Remains at the site, however, do not confirm the existence of a significant center for metal sculpture. The district of Chittagong, Bangladesh, one of the few areas in which Buddhism has continued to survive in the subcontinent, appears to have been the most active metal-casting center in Bengal. By far the largest hoard of metal sculpture has been discovered in Jhewari, but Mainamati, another important monastic site in the same region, must also have supported a productive workshop.[3] Numerous Hindu bronzes have been recovered from several other districts, including Rajshahi, Rangpur, and Dacca in Bangladesh to name only a few. Bronzes depicting Hindu deities have been found in Bihar as well but fewer than in Bengal. Buddhist monasteries, such as Apanaka in Kurkihar, also have yielded a number of bronzes representing Hindu divinities.

In Orissa stone seems to have remained the principal sculptural medium. Except for the discovery of an impressive hoard in Achutrajpur near Puri, the numerous other Buddhist sites in the state, including Lalitgiri and Udaygiri, have yielded surprisingly few bronzes. While the Achutrajpur hoard has been published, very little has been written about Orissan bronzes in general.[4] Although the finds from the period are few, brass images continued to be used by Hindus, especially in domestic shrines, until modern times. These later images, especially of Krishna and Radha, are best known. While Tibetan monasteries have yielded many bronzes made in Bihar and Bengal [83, 102], curiously no Orissan Buddhist bronze has yet emerged from them.



Relief, temple 3, Nalanda, Bihar, seventh century. Photograph by the author.

In Bihar and Bengal the principal building material was brick. Terra-cotta sculptures frequently adorned the walls of temples and stupas, but no example is included in the collection. Most stone sculptures catalogued are stelae with divine figures. From the eighth to ninth century it became fashionable to place stone images in the subsidiary niches of brick temples, which has largely determined the shape and design of the stelae. In contrast Orissan sculptures, like those in central India, are more varied. Apart from a relief inserted into a niche [111], they also include sculptured architectural fragments [112–13].

As elsewhere in northern India the earlier sculptures made between 700 and 900 in all three regions are characterized by iconographic and compositional simplicity. From about the tenth century, especially in Bengal and Bihar, as the temples became more elaborate the stelae became more crowded with larger numbers of attendant figures and richer ornamentation. By and large the same aesthetic norms and iconographic as well as compositional formulae were followed in Bihar and Bengal. Orissan sculptures are more clearly recognizable for their style and iconographic variation even if minor. This is particularly true of Hindu rather than Buddhist sculpture. Buddhist art in all three states reveals a greater iconographic uniformity than does Hindu art. Few specific regional iconographic variations in the Buddhist art of eastern India are encountered.

Moreover the hoard discovered at Achutrajpur clearly demonstrates that at least for Buddhist bronzes, the Orissan sculptors were certainly aware of, if not strongly influenced by, what was going on in contemporary centers of bronze casting in Bihar, especially Nalanda and Kurkihar. The bronzes produced in the monastic centers of southeast Bangladesh, however, show more notable variations in style and technique but less in iconography.

Much greater iconographic deviations are evident in Hindu art among all three regions. The early Vishnu images of southeastern Bangladesh [90] are quite different not only from those produced after 900 in Bihar but also from those that became current later in Bengal [100a–e]. Attendants in early Vishnu images are usually depicted as personified attributes, thereby continuing the Gupta-period tradition. After the tenth century in Bengal and Bihar Vishnu was almost invariably represented with Lakshmi and Sarasvati. Only in this region was Sarasvati transferred from Brahma to Vishnu, presumably to demonstrate Vishnu's power to control two apparently antagonistic cowives, the goddesses of wealth, Lakshsmi, and wisdom, Sarasvati. It has been an ancient belief in Indian civilization that the rich are not likely to be knowledgeable and vice versa.

In Bengal and Bihar Uma-Mahesvara images are almost invariably distinguished by a tender intimacy between Siva and Parvati. Siva generally is shown stroking Parvati's chin and fondling her breast [79]. In Orissa he frequently does the latter but not always the former. The one Orissan metal sculpture where he strokes her chin may reflect extraneous influence [107]. The peculiar form of Siva and Ganesa dancing on the back of their respective mounts was almost certainly an innovation of the sculptors of Bengal, from where the compositional formula may have migrated to neighboring Bihar. The representation seems not to have appealed to Orissan sculptors, who place the admiring bull behind the dancing Siva. Ganesa rarely dances on his rat in Orissa.



Celestial women on a temple, Rajarani, Bhubaneswar, tenth century. Photograph by the author.

Two pervasive subjects in Orissan sculpture are celestial nymphs and couples in union [112–13]. While in Bihar stone fragments with celestials are used as architectural motifs, couples engaged in explicit sex acts are conspicuously absent. The reason for the popularity of the theme in the religious art of Orissa rather than Bihar and Bengal is not known. There are also many other noteworthy iconographic differences among the various regions. For instance, the image of a supine lady [93], with or without a child, popular in Bengal and Bihar, is unknown in Orissa, whereas the peculiar form of the Orissan Parvati [111] with two snake-bearing attendants is not encountered in Bihar or Bengal. It is not possible to determine which literary sources of iconography were followed in which area.

Bihar and Bengal are certainly richer in Buddhist art than is Orissa, although Buddhism flourished in Orissa between 700 and at least 1500. The cult of the goddess appears to have been more prevalent in Orissa and Bengal, where it has remained popular to this day, than in Bihar. Saivism was by far the most important faith in Orissa, and most surviving temples in the state were dedicated to Siva. Although today the most famous temple in Orissa is the thirteenth-century shrine of Jagannath, identified with Vasudeva-Krishna, Vaishnavism, which began gaining in importance in Bihar and Bengal around the seventh century, seems to have captured the imagination of the Hindus in Orissa after the tenth century. Vishnu is represented much more frequently in the sculpture of Bengal and Bihar than in Orissa. The large number of small bronzes, discovered particularly in Bengal, clearly indicate that the deity became a household god. Vaishnavas in Bengal subsequently transferred their allegiance to Krishna rather than Vishnu as in many

other parts of the country. Again a goddess whose cult was especially popular in Bengal and Bihar but less so in Orissa was Manasa, the serpent deity. The origins of her cult are obscure, but the Bihari bronze is one of the earliest and most impressive metal representations of the goddess [77]. Like Sri-Lakshmi, Manasa probably was universally venerated by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains.

Another such ecumenical figure in Bihar particularly, at least during the eighth to ninth century was Balarama, elder brother of Vasudeva-Krishna and god of agriculture. His cult in Bihar may predate the Christian period, but it seems to have been quite widespread after the seventh century.[5] Bronzes representing this deity as well as Vishnu, Siva, and other members of the Hindu pantheon have been found at Nalanda and Kurkihar. Most Buddhist monasteries in Bihar and Bengal seem to have been quite catholic in accepting bronzes representing Hindu deities. Representations of Hindu divinities and myths also often are included among didactic temple wall reliefs. While this may have been true of Buddhist centers in other parts of the country as well, certainly in eastern India the evidence is more compelling. It may have been a regional peculiarity, especially since tantric practices and rituals were common to both religions. Moreover, although Buddhism flourished in the entire eastern region between the eighth and thirteenth centuries, the Buddhist laity must have become increasingly aware of their slowly diminishing sphere of influence and deliberately adopted a more liberal attitude. This may have contributed, after the destruction of the monasteries in the twelfth to thirteenth centuries, to the smoother absorption of Buddhists and their deities into Hindu society and religion. Many Buddhists also converted to Islam because of the rigid caste system of the Hindus.

The dominant political power in eastern India between 700 and 1300 was the Pala dynasty of Bihar and Bengal. Sometime around 750 an obscure chief from northern Bengal known as Gopala (c. 750–75) appears to have been elected ruler of a small kingdom. By 850, when the Pala king Devapala died, the realm encompassed a formidable empire. Thereafter, until the appearance of Mahipala I (r. c. 988–1036) around 988, the fortunes of the Palas fluctuated a good deal and most rulers remained minor figures, confined to a small kingdom comprising parts of southern Bihar and northern Bengal. Mahipala ruled for almost half a century, and although his realm was invaded by the Cholas from the south, he seems to have regained much of the territories that belonged to the empire at the time of Devapala's death. Mahipala was followed by a number of weak rulers until Ramapala ascended the throne about 1077 and ruled an extensive empire until about 1120, when he committed suicide. Thereafter the disintegration resumed, and by midcentury the Palas were a spent force.

A number of Pala monarchs professed the Buddhist faith, undoubtedly one reason why Buddhism flourished especially in Bihar and Bengal during their reign (c. 750–1150). Not only did major monasteries benefit from their largesse, but one of the most influential, the Vikramasila monastery in Bihar, may well have been an imperial foundation. The Khadgas, Devas, Chandras, and other successive smaller dynasties in the riverine plains of Bangladesh, in a kingdom known then as Samatata, were also Buddhists and patronized monasteries and artists. Most sculptures from southeastern Bangladesh in the collection represent Buddhist themes.

By the end of the eleventh century much of Bengal was ruled by the Sena (c. 1050–c. 1150) and Varman (c. 1075–c. 1225) dynasties, who were staunch Hindus, being especially partial to Vishnu. Parts of Bihar too came under the control of the Hindu Gahadavala dynasty after Ramapala's death. The strong support of these dynasties as well as the destruction of the Buddhist monasteries by invading Muslim armies during the late twelfth century ended the preeminence that Buddhism had enjoyed under the Palas. Although the Senas continued to rule eastern Bengal until the thirteenth century, large areas of Bengal and Bihar had already been overrun by the Muslims who were to remain the dominant political power in the region until the defeat of Siraj-ud-daula (1728–57) by Robert Clive (1725–74) at the battle of Plassey in 1757. Buddhism never recovered except to linger in the hill tracts of Chittagong. With the gradual conversion of a large part of the population to Islam, the Hindus in Bihar and Bengal became less active in constructing temples. While metal images continued to be made for domestic consumption, stone carvers and brick layers found employment with Muslim patrons, building their forts, mansions, and mosques.

By about the middle of the eighth century in Orissa the Sailodbhava dynasty came to an end. During the next two and a half centuries several dynasties ruled in different parts of the land. Among them the most noteworthy are the Bhauma-Karas and Gangas, and although they have left a large number of records, there is no certainty about the chronology of their reigns. From about the middle of the tenth century for about a century the Somavamsi kings of southern Kosala controlled Orissa. Thereafter, sometime before the end of the eleventh century, the Gangas of neighboring Kalinga (parts of northeastern Andhra Pradesh) with the help of the Cholas, established their sway over Orissa. Especially noteworthy among the Ganga kings were Anantavarman (1078–1150), the builder of the Jagannath temple in Puri, and Narasimha I (1238–64), responsible for the great sun temple at Konarak.

Even though the Jagannath temple was built under Anantavarman, most Orissan ruling families were devotees of Siva. During the Somavamsi and Bhauma-Kara rule Buddhism also flourished in Orissa. Until the end of the thirteenth century most Hindu temples were dedicated to Siva or the Great Goddess. The Vaishnava faith received a great impetus from the celebrated teacher Narahari Tirtha (lifedates unknown) during the reign of Narasimha II (r. 1279–1306). Thereafter Vishnuism became much more popular in Orissa.



Model of a temple, Bodhgaya, Bihar, tenth–eleventh centuries. Soapstone, 5½ in (13.5 cm). Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Gift of Benjamin Rowland, Jr.

The history of Buddhism in Orissa dates to the reign of the Maurya emperor Asoka (died 232 B.C.), who had conquered Kalinga. Extant remains show the continued presence of Buddhism in many parts of the state from the sixth to sixteenth centuries. Impressive ruins of large monastic establishments have been found at Achutrajpur, where the most significant hoard of Orissan bronzes was discovered, and at Ajodhya, Lalitagiri, Salampur, and Udaygiri. After the sixteenth century, however, the faith's decline was rapid and complete.

The monasteries of eastern India played an enormous role in the propagation of Buddhism and its art throughout Southeast Asia. The most important shrine of Buddhism was Bodhgaya, in Bihar, and a visit to Bodhgaya was a desideratum for every pious Buddhist. Most important Buddhist pilgrimage centers associated with the Buddha were located in Bihar and neighboring Uttar Pradesh. The important Buddhist monasteries, of which Nalanda was by far the most famous, were also situated in Bihar, Bengal, and some in Orissa. Thus monks and pilgrims, particularly from Nepal, Tibet, Sri Lanka, Burma, Java, and China

continued to visit the sacred places. Nalanda especially was at the time considered to be a great seat of learning on the subcontinent, and monks from all over the country and abroad frequented the monastery for advanced religious education. Most important monasteries in eastern India were active centers of artistic production, and large quantities of portable objects created by local artists found their way back to the visitors' homelands. Small bronzes and terra-cotta tablets were particularly popular, and these in turn must have served as models for local artists in the various countries. While most scholars have emphasized the influence of such schools as Nalanda on the art of Tibet, Nepal, and Southeast Asia in general, that exerted by Orissa and Bengal has received less attention. For example, Buddhist art of Java reveals clear affinities with that of Orissa, while Bengal, especially the eastern region known today as Bangladesh, remained a dominant influence in neighboring Burma and contributed significantly to the religion and art of Tibet.

For their aesthetic value and iconographic variety the museum's collection of sculptures from Bihar and Bengal is particularly strong. A small relief with the Mothers and two near-contemporary Tara and Buddha sculptures [73–75] are among the finest examples of early Pala-period sculptures from Bihar. They still echo the grace and restrained poise of the Gupta aesthetic. The beautiful figure of Maitreya in buff sandstone [82] is a rare sculpture from the Bodhgaya area and is characteristic of the exuberant and animated style preferred by sculptors of the entire region after the tenth century. This liveliness and rich ornamentation gain prominence because of the crisp carving of details as is clearly evident in the sculptures representing dancing Ganesa [105] and Siva [99] as well as the rare Marichi from Bangladesh [91]. While most of these sculptures reflect well-known regional styles, the relief depicting the three principal Hindu divinities [78] is probably from northern Bihar and displays a less-familiar idiom of the Pala-period sculptural tradition.

The large number of bronzes in the collection is even more representative of the various regional centers of metal casting than are the stone sculptures. Unlike those from other parts of the subcontinent, bronzes from eastern India, especially those made for Buddhists, were often gilded as in Nepal and Tibet. Like those from Kashmir, the greater number of bronzes from Bihar and Bengal in the collection are Buddhist. Such bronzes from Bihar and Bengal were in great demand in Tibet as well as Burma and Java. Under the Pala dynasty Buddhism was particularly strong in Bihar and Bengal, where several important monasteries were founded or generously patronized by Pala monarchs. Monks from foreign countries were regular visitors to these monasteries, and countless Indian monks visited various Asian countries, the most famous being Atisa (982–1054), who is remembered as the reviver of Buddhism in Tibet. Several bronzes in the collection probably emerged from Tibet and may even have been made there by Indian artists who may have formed part of Atisa's retinue. Many similar bronzes continue to come out of Tibetan monasteries, and one cannot always be certain whether they were made in Bihar or Bengal and taken by monks and pilgrims to that Himalayan country or were manufactured locally by artists under the strong influence of images of the Pala period, which were especially venerated by the Tibetans. The close relationships between the monasteries of Bihar and Bengal and to a lesser degree of Orissa and those in Burma, Thailand, and Java generally is well known. Because of Burma's geographical continguity with India, Burmese Buddhists seem to have had

close intercourse with the monasteries of Bangladesh particularly of the coastal Chittagong region, which is well represented in the collection by several sculptures [88, 90–92].

Apart from the fact that the collection contains fine examples of stone and metal sculptures from Bihar and Bengal depicting familiar themes, such as Vishnu, Uma-Mahesvara, the snake-goddess Manasa, Buddha, and bodhisattvas, there are a few interesting sculptures that represent lesser known iconographic types. Among Hindu subjects are the fragmentary, but graceful dancing Siva [99], the two stylistically different bronzes of the fire-god Agni [84, 89], and the small, but elaborate composition with the hunter-god Revanta [97].

Among Buddhist sculptures several examples depict tantric deities who were extremely popular in Bihar and Bengal. A particularly rare and beautiful relief depicts the Buddhist goddess of light, Marichi, in a rather spirited representation [91]. Equally animated is a bronze figure of the dancing Heruka, an esoteric Buddhist deity infrequently encountered in art [96]. Other unusual representations are of Vasudhara [95], one of only two known examples of her six-armed manifestation from the subcontinent (although she is extremely popular among Nepali Buddhists) and an exquisitely modeled image of the eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara. This bronze may be the only known representation of this deity from eastern India.

Although fewer Orissan sculptures are represented in the collection, the group probably is the largest in an American collection. The most interesting stone sculpture is an impressive Parvati [111], which presents iconographic features unique to Orissa. Considering the paucity of Orissan bronzes the examples in the collection reveal a striking variety of styles and iconography. The group also includes a fine example of a fourteenth-century ivory carving [114], for which the region was justly famous. Among the later figures, which are made of brass as in contemporary Bengal, the dancing Krishna [116] is a particularly well-modeled sculpture that shows influences from the south.

Notes

1. For sculptures of Bihar and Bengal see Huntington 1984 and D. Mitra 1982; for Orissa see Donaldson 1985–86.

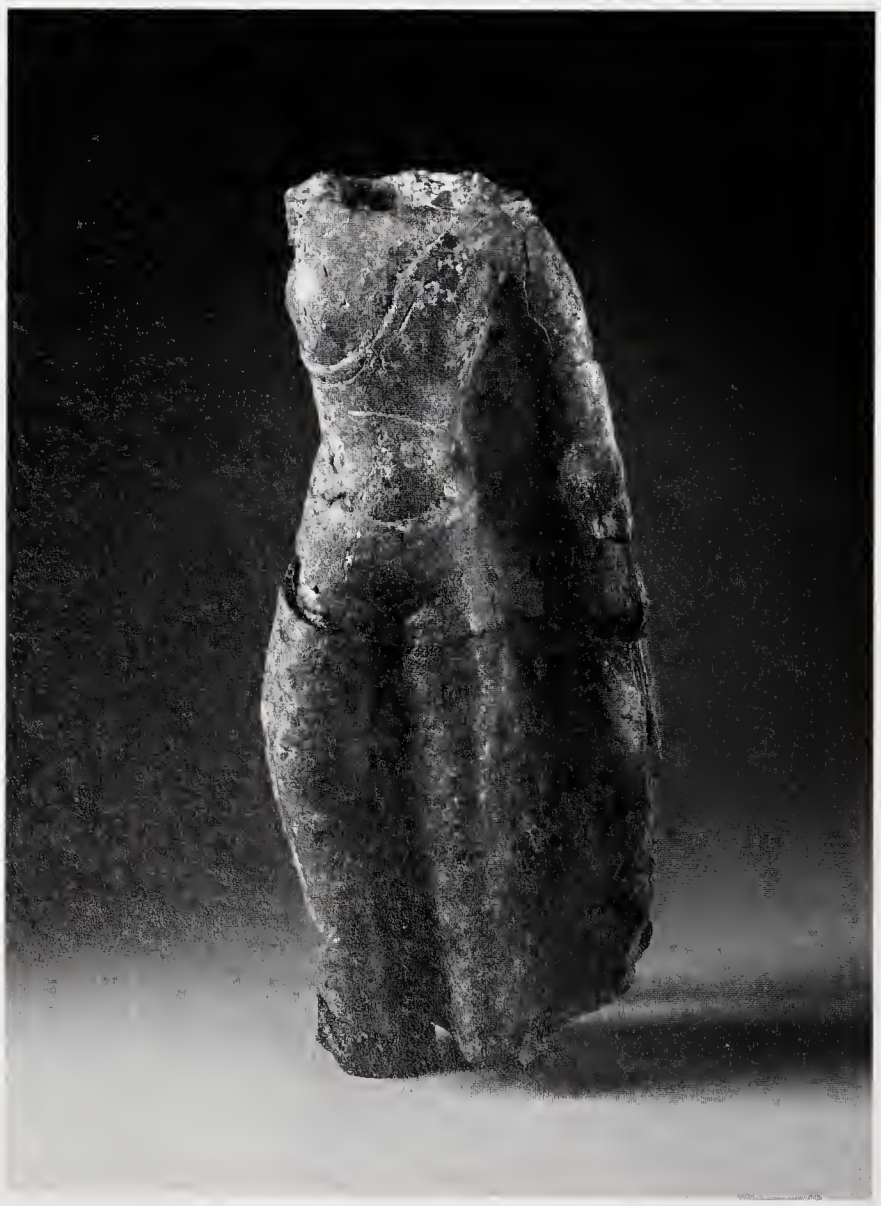
2. Asher 1980 and D. Paul 1987.

3. D. Mitra 1982.

4. D. Mitra 1978.

5. See S. V. Gorakshakar, "Some Inscribed Balarāma Images from Eastern India," *Lalit Kalā* 19: 27–32.

*68 A Buddha*
Bihar; c. 700
Patinated copper alloy; 4 in (10.1 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.86.338.9



The patinated, highly corroded, and damaged surface of this Buddha without head, feet, and hands indicates that it must have been buried underground. While its exact findspot is not known, it very likely was discovered in Bihar. Although few early Buddhist bronzes have been excavated in Bihar, the discovery of a hoard at Chausa in 1931 pushes the history of bronze casting in that state to at least the first century B.C. That bronze casting continued to flourish in the region during the Gupta period is known from literary and artistic evidence. The largest surviving bronze Buddha from the subcontinent, now in the Birmingham Museum in England and probably cast in the seventh century, was discovered in Sultangunj, Bhagalpur District, Bihar.

Stylistically this Buddha is closely related to Bihari Buddhas excavated from Sultangunj and Nalanda and dated generally to the seventh century (Schroeder 1982, pp. 218–19, no. 46a–g). These bronze Buddhas are characterized by slim, attenuated proportions and highly abstracted modeling. The undergarment is identified by a narrow depression below the navel, and the volume of the upper garment is suggested by very lightly delineated parallel folds as in this example. The fragmentary bronze is probably slightly earlier than the seated Buddha or Maitreya from Nalanda [70].

69 *The Goddess Chunda (?)*
Bihar, Patna District; c. 700
Copper alloy; 2¼ in (5.7 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.85.289.2

Like the Buddha [68], this small bronze may also have been buried underground. Despite the corroded surface and obliterated facial features, the iconography and form of the figure, seated in the classic meditation posture, can be discerned.

The left hand of the goddess forms the gesture of meditation, and the right, although broken, probably exhibited the gesture of charity. Very likely the goddess represents Chunda [39]. Several early images of the goddess have been found in Nalanda (Schroeder 1982, pp. 220–31, no. 52b–c), where she is similarly depicted but with two additional arms carrying a lotus and book. It is possible that this figure had two more arms, although in early representations the goddess is often shown with only two arms.

Because of its condition it is difficult to ascertain the age of the bronze. Comparable Nalanda bronzes, some representing Chunda, are generally dated to the eighth century. The modeling and proportions of this figure are strongly reminiscent of Gupta-period goddesses (Pal 1978b, pp. 108–9, nos. 60–61), and hence a date around 700 is not unlikely.



70 *A Buddha*
Bihar, Nalanda; early eighth century
Gilt bronze; 7 3/16 in (18.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.75.4.3
Literature: Rowland 1963, no. 21; Rosenfield 1966, p. 71, no. 62; Pal 1974a, fig. 186; Schroeder 1982, pp. 224–25, no. 49f.



The exact identification of such enthroned Buddhas [13] seated in *pralambapadasana* (extended legs) or *bhadrasana* (auspicious pose) and engaged in preaching is uncertain. They may represent the Buddha Sakyamuni or Maitreya. The type was already popular in Gupta India at nearby Sarnath and in the cave temples of western India. No inscription identifies these figures as Maitreya as do later traditions in Nepal, Tibet, and China. Nevertheless generally such figures are identified as Maitreya.

There is no doubt that this iconographic type was popular during the seventh and eighth centuries in the important Nalanda monastery as well as other contemporary sites such as Rajgir, Bihar. Thereafter the type is represented less frequently.

The bronze surface is corroded, but much of the original gilding is still visible. As is usual in such early bronzes from Nalanda, the throne is elaborately designed with lively animal forms, including lions, elephants, the mythical *vyāla* (elephant-lion), and two cherubic *kinnarīs* (man-bird figures similar to harpies), who stand on either side of the oval nimbus. Characteristic of Nalanda bronzes, the nimbus is fringed with a prominent flame motif and a lotus is attached to the back of the head. The Buddha is slim, with a narrow, oval face dominated by a sharp and prominent nose. Except for the slight modulation of the flesh around the stomach, the figure is sparsely modeled, continuing the abstracted plasticity of Gupta-period Sarnath sculptures and stucco sculptures of temple 3 at Nalanda. This exquisitely detailed sculpture is a fine example of the early Pala-period bronzes produced for the important monastic establishment of Nalanda.

*71 The Bodhisattva Manjusri*
Bihar, Patna District; ninth century
Schist; 19½ in (49.5 cm)
Gift of John MacDonald
M.79.188
Literature: Begley 1969, pp. 21, 28, no. 9; *Art of India: Sculpture and Miniature Paintings* (Minneapolis: University Gallery, University of Minnesota, 1969), p. 9, no. 11; Newmann 1984, p. 35, fig. 29.



The svelte, youthful figure within a niche is Manjusri, bodhisattva of wisdom. He is represented here as Mañjuśrīkumāra (youth or prince of pleasing appearance). Characteristic of a young boy, he wears a necklace of tiger claws, which are regarded as protective charms for children. His principal attribute is the book, which is placed on the blue lotus blossom attached to his left arm. His left hand is placed on the head of a dwarf with flying hair. He very likely is the swordsman or personification of the sword, which he uses as a support for his somewhat contorted posture. The sword is the attribute with which Manjusri cuts through the fog of ignorance. The palm of his right hand, exhibiting the gesture of reassurance, is also marked with a small wheel. Two small stupas are added on either side of the arch.

The elegance of the figure is emphasized not only by the strong contrast between his well-proportioned form and that of his diminutive attendant but also by his swaying sash, sinuous lotus-stalk, flying ribbons, and sensitive rendering. Although the modeling is subtle, the depth of the carving imparts the forms with considerable plasticity. Especially noteworthy is the crisp delineation of the ornaments, attire, and ornate architectural setting.

Such reliefs are of significance for reconstructing the stone architecture of the region, where few lithic structures from the Pala period have survived. Many ornamental motifs seen here are common in temples of the period, but there are subtle differences of emphasis as well as design. For example, bunches of mangoes, instead of leaves, hang from the pots at the bottom of the columns. While the other motifs, such as the masklike face of glory, capital design, and chaitya-window motif on the pediment, are also encountered in regional architecture, they are treated here in a distinctive manner with notable variations. Characteristic of Pala-period Bihari architecture, the entire segment was probably inserted as a subsidiary shrine in a brick-and-stucco temple, perhaps in Nalanda.



72 *A Ewer with Gajalakshmi*
Bihar, Gaya District; ninth century
Patinated copper alloy; 7¼ in (18.3 cm)
Purchased with Harry and Yvonne Lenart Funds
M.85.193.2

This ewer is a rare ritual utensil from the Pala period. The lotus design of the flaring foot has been almost completely obliterated, and the rim around the top of the neck is missing, but the lotus design around the shoulder can still be discerned. The base of the neck is adorned with a pearl collar. Below the spout is the seated figure of the goddess Lakshmi being consecrated with water by two elephants symbolizing the directions and rain clouds. Lakshmi holds a lotus with her left hand, and a second flower rises sinuously beside her right arm. She forms the gesture of charity with her right hand.

A pot or ewer representing Gajalakshmi (Lakshmi bathed by elephants) usually would indicate its use in Hindu rituals, but Buddhists too venerated the goddess. The form of the goddess is closely related to that of a bronze figure from a ruined monastery in Kurkihar (Huntington 1984, fig. 79). Many Hindu icons have been found at the site, and in at least two bronzes attendants hold pots of similar shape but without spouts (Huntington 1984, figs. 30–31).





73 *The Goddess Tara*
Bihar, Patna District; ninth century
Schist; 34 in (86.3 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.76.2.30
Literature: Eastman 1934, p. 10, no. 15; Coomaraswamy & Heeramaneck 1935, p. 8, no. 10; Detroit Institute of Arts, *Buddhist Art* (Detroit: Detroit Institute of Arts, 1942), no. 20; Trubner 1950, p. 27, no. 46; Zimmer [1966] 1960, pl. 382; Dohanian 1961, no. 24; Rosenfield 1966, p. 42, no. 30; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 117.

The inscription above the goddess's head is the Buddhist creed. The inscription along the base tells us that the sculpture is the pious gift of the elder monk Sakyamitra (see illustration and Appendix). The little figure holding flowers in his right hand and looking up in admiration at the goddess represents Sakyamitra. Nothing more is known about the donor, but in his history of Buddhism (1608) the Tibetan scholar Taranath mentions a Sakyamitra who may have lived during the reign of Dharmapāla (r. c. 775–812) (Chimpa & Chattopadhyaya 1980, p. 268). Sakyamitra, however, was a common Buddhist name.

Among the unusual details are the almost rectangular shape of the stele and flower-and-bud border. In Pala-period stelae from the ninth century the common practice generally was to decorate the border with beads or a flame motif. During the seventh and eighth centuries floral motifs were popular in Nalanda and elsewhere (Asher 1980, pls. 73–75, 117, 192–193, 202). A rectangular stele is quite rare and occurs in a Buddha image from the Patna District, which Asher dates about 800 (1980, pl. 180). A closer parallel may be seen in a Tara from Kurkihar dated to the ninth century (Huntington 1984, fig. 113). Moreover as Rosenfield (1966) pointed out: "The smooth contours of the image's roundly modeled forms are dependent for definition upon the play of light and do not yet possess the taut outline of a later period. The figure may be compared with the dated Khadairavani Tārā of A.D. 845 from Hilsa and now in the Patna Museum." Compared with the Hilsa Tara the museum's example definitely seems earlier.

Characteristic of Tara, the goddess holds a blue lotus with her left hand and exhibits the gesture of charity with her right hand, which is also marked with a small lotus. The two figures on either side of her head are the transcendental Buddhas Ratnasambhava on her right and Akshobhya on the left. More intriguing is the four-armed, obese, and angry goddess standing along the side below Tara's left knee. With her two upper hands she holds an elephant skin, as does the god Samvara [16], and noose. The sword is an attribute of the goddess Ekajata, companion of Khadairavaṇī Tara (Tara of the acacia grove). The elephant hide is often given to Ekajata in early images but rarely in texts.



Detail of side





*74 A Relief with Mother Goddesses*
Bihar, Patna District; ninth century
Schist; 6 in (15.2 cm)
Gift of Paul F. Walter
M.71.110.2
Literature: Pal 1971, p. 99; Pal 1974a, pp. 10, 46, no. 7.

By the ninth century such reliefs with images of the Sapta-matrikas along with Siva and Ganesa had become common in Hindu temples. The reliefs usually are placed above temple doorways and were not necessarily the focus of any cult. Unlike the central Indian relief [38], the figures in this example are all seated with their mounts very clearly represented below their right feet. Another unusual feature is that the deities are seated from right to left rather than the more common left to right. Whether this reverse disposition fulfilled a ritual requirement or is the result of the sculptor's capriciousness is not known.



Beginning from the right, the vina-playing Siva, or Virabhadra, with his bull is followed by the three-headed Brahmani (attributes, rosary and waterpot; mount, gander); Mahesvari (rosary and trident; bull); Vaishnavi (lotus seed, club, wheel, conch; Garuda); Kaumari (fruit and spear; peacock); Indrani (thunderbolt; elephant); Varahi with sow's head (chopper and skull cup; buffalo); and emaciated Chamunda (skull cup, unrecognizable, trident, left hand touching lip in gesture of admonition; man).

The closest stylistic parallels for this sculpture are two ninth-century stelae representing the birth of the Buddha (Huntington 1984, fig. 128; Pal 1984, p. 80, fig. 22). One was recovered from Nalanda and is now in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, the other is now in Seattle. While the broad shapes and facial expressions of the Mother Goddesses are very similar to those in the Seattle stele, the figural proportions and modeling are more akin to the Nalanda image. The design of the garments of the Mother Goddesses is identical to that worn by Maya in the Nalanda relief. The sculptor was obviously familiar with the elephant and gander but not with the peacock or bovines, both of which are stylized.

75 *The Buddha as the Conqueror of Mara*
Bihar, Gaya District; c. 850
Schist; 31¾ in (80.6 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.73.4.11
Literature: Eastman 1934, p. 11, no. 20; Coomaraswamy & Heeramaneck 1935, p. 8, no. 9; Zimmer [1966] 1960, pl. 381; Dohanian 1961, no. 23; Rosenfield 1966, p. 41, no. 29; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 116.

As with the Tara [73] the Buddhist creed is inscribed around the inner edge of the halo and the dedicatory inscription is on the base. The sculpture was dedicated by Vimalaprabha (see Appendix). Although we are given no information about him, from his name and the diminutive figure seated above the base we can presume that he was a monk. An almost identical image, now in the Avery Brundage Collection at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, was dedicated by the elder monk Prajñāprabha (d'Argence et al. 1984, no. 3). A third very similar image, although dedicated by a different monk, is in the Seattle Art Museum (Trubner et al. 1973, p. 94, no. 12). There seems no doubt that all three sculptures were made about the same time, probably in the same atelier if not by the same sculptor, very likely in Gaya.

The Buddha represented here is unquestionably Sakyamuni as the conqueror of Mara. Apart from the gesture of his right hand, which symbolizes his calling of the earth to witness his victory over Mara, the occasion is also recalled by the branches of the bodhi tree that hang over the nimbus. It was below this tree in Bodhgaya that Sakyamuni became enlightened after prolonged meditation. The incident is commemorated by the principal image inside the Bodhgaya temple and remained a very popular theme with Buddhists in this region. The throne symbolizes the *vajrāsana* (diamond seat), and this image type is also known as Buddha of the Diamond Seat.

The Buddha stylistically may be placed somewhere between the simple stelae of the eighth century and ornate reliefs of the tenth century. The elongated and unmodulated limbs, abrupt roll of flesh below the navel, and narrow fold of the upper garment are features that do not occur in Buddha images before the mid-ninth century. The sculpture exhibits an elegant simplicity as well as decorative motifs that are vestiges of earlier Bihari sculpture. The geometrical motif decorating the columns at the base and crossbar behind the Buddha's shoulders occur in a much earlier sculpture from Bodhgaya (see Pal 1986, p. 261), while the chaitya, or shrine, is generally not encountered after the ninth century. A date in the second half of the ninth century seems to be suggested as well by the fact that the Buddha sits on a simple cushion rather than on a lotus as he does in most tenth-century images (see Huntington 1984, figs. 103, 117–18).





76 *The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara*
Bihar, Kurkihar, c. 900
Patinated copper alloy; 6¾ in (17.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.81.8.3
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 71, no. 63; Glynn 1972, fig. 15; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 115; Pal 1988.

The inscription at the back of the base (see Appendix) informs us that this bronze was the pious gift of the monk Viryavarman of Kanchi (Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu). Viryavarman dedicated two other bronzes in the Apanaka monastery (Schroeder 1982, pp. 261, no. 58c–d), and this bronze too was without doubt made and given to the same monastery. When exactly Viryavarman lived in the Bihari monastery is not known, but most scholars have dated the other two bronzes in the ninth century, although Schroeder attributes them to the tenth.

The closest stylistic parallel for this bronze is offered by another Avalokiteshvara recovered from the Apanaka monastery (Huntington 1984, fig. 178). Apart from their similarity in proportions, modeling, and facial features, both are attired and adorned identically. Especially noteworthy is the fact that the figures wear two necklaces, one of pearls and the other plain. Only the hairstyle is different. Here the hair falls on the neck in sausage curls, but in the other bronze the hair hangs in simple strands. Notwithstanding such differences, it seems almost certain that the two were made by the same atelier. The elaborate aureole of the other unfortunately is missing in this example.

This loss, however, emphasizes the plasticity of the figure's form, and the articulated contours enhance the elegance of the graceful posture. Avalokiteshvara's right hand exhibits the gesture of charity, and his left hand holds a lotus. The effigy of his spiritual overlord, the transcendental Buddha Amitabha (Infinite light), is added to the crown of matted hair. The back of the figure is not finished, and it was certainly meant for a niche.

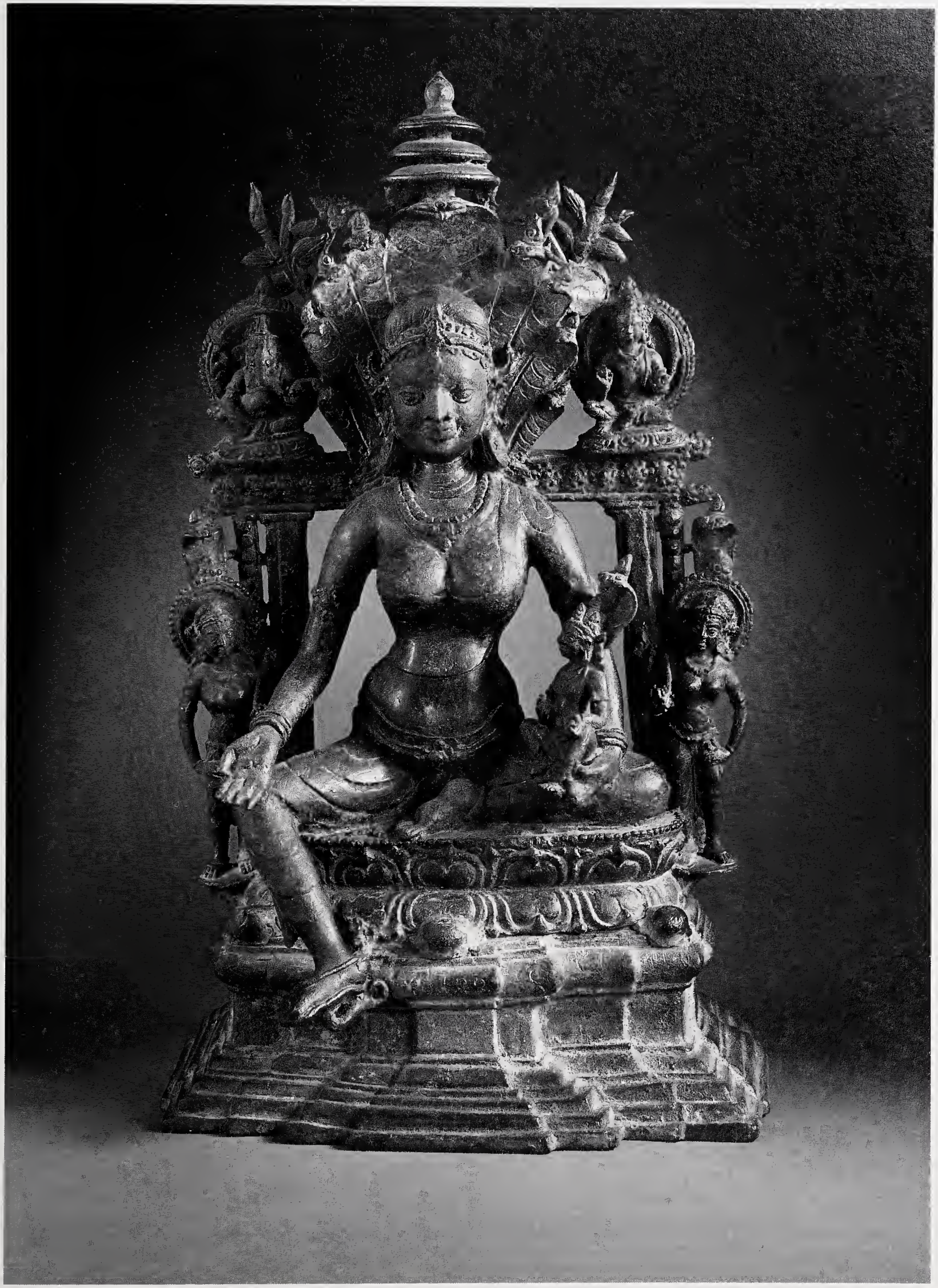


77 *The Goddess Manasa*
Bihar, Gaya District; c. 900
Copper alloy; 18½ in (47.0 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.83.1.2
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 73, no. 66; Palb 1974, fig. 4; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 114; Schroeder 1982, pp. 276–77, no. 66e; Bhattacharya 1987, pp. 341–42, pl. IV.

The inscription along the base is much abraded, but the word *devī,* meaning "goddess," can be discerned followed by *{xx}sā,* which may have stood for Manasa. The cult of the snake goddess Manasa appears to have gained currency in eastern India during the Pala period and has continued to remain popular. This example is not only the most impressive bronze representation of the goddess to have survived but also is of unusual iconographic interest.

Her head set off by the impressive canopy of a multihooded serpent, the elegant goddess sits with her son Āstika on her lap. He too is provided with a snake canopy. Two more snake goddesses, their divinity indicated by their nimbuses, stand on either side of the central character and act as flywhisk bearers. More interesting are the inclusion of the elephant-headed Ganesa on one side of the throne's crossbar and the wind god Vayu on the other. The latter can be identified by the billowing scarf he holds over his head. While Ganesa is frequently present in images of Manasa, Vayu's inclusion is unusual. Manasa reliefs often include attendant deities that cannot always be identified or explained because few texts contain elaborate descriptions of her iconography.

Most scholars have compared this bronze to ninth–tenth-century bronzes from Kurkihar. The bronze is also closely related to others of the second quarter of the ninth century from Kurkihar and Nalanda (Huntington 1984, figs. 28–31). The figure of Manasa, with articulated torso and naturalistically modeled pelvis, is closer to a stone Tara dedicated in the late ninth century (Huntington 1984, fig. 40) and a bronze ninth–tenth-century Tara from Kurkihar (Schroeder 1982, p. 263, no. 59e). The pedestal is considerably more elaborate than comparable early Pala examples. Nevertheless a date around 900 for this elaborate altarpiece seems reasonable. Various components of the sculpture may have been cast separately and then assembled as evident by the presence of knobs in front and back to secure the lotus to the pedestal.



78 *The Hindu Trinity*
Bihar; tenth century
Schist; 22½ in (57.2 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ramesh C. Kapoor
M.86.337



This rare relief depicts the three principal deities that form the triune manifestation of Brahma, the supreme being who remains formless. In the center is Siva, the destroyer. On his right is Vishnu, the preserver, and on his left Brahma, the creator. The fact that Siva is placed in the middle indicates the preference of the donor, who may be represented by the genuflecting adorant next to Brahma.

Each deity stands on a lotus in a strictly frontal posture, accompanied by his vehicle: Garuda for Vishnu, bull for Siva, and gander for Brahma. Each also is provided with an identical, but separate pointed aureole with flame border. Vishnu's attributes are the gesture of charity, club, wheel, and conch. Two of Siva's hands are broken, but the other two hold a rosary and trident. Brahma's broken emblem was very likely a ladle; the others are a rosary, staff with unrecognizable head, and waterpot. Apart from their emblems and vehicles, the three are distinguished by other features as well. Vishnu has a tall crown and wildflower garland. Siva has the crescent, matted hair, third eye, and snake. Brahma's brahmanhood is indicated by a paunch, and he is given three heads.

Although the exact findspot of the relief is unknown, very likely it emerged from northern Bihar, from the region known as the Terai that straddles Nepal and Bihar. While the basic figural form adheres to the Bihari norm, the greater abstraction of Siva and Vishnu is reminiscent of Nepali modeling. Noteworthy is the absence of the erect penis for Siva, which is frequently depicted in most east Indian representations of the god [see 79]. Unusual also is the simple shape of the aureoles; reliefs from the heartland of Bihar are generally somewhat busier. A curious feature is the three-quarter profile of Brahma's side heads, which usually are shown in profile. The bull and gander are lively representations; the latter holds a string of pearls in its mouth, while the former looks up with adoration at his master.



79 *Siva's Family*
Bihar, Gaya District; tenth century
Copper alloy; 6¾ in (17.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.79.9.3
Literature: Pal 1966, pp. 74–75, no. 70; Schroeder 1982, p. 280, no. 68b.

The principal deities are placed atop a lotus on a high rectangular base as if they were on their mountain habitat. Siva's right foot is supported by his bull, but Parvati's headless lion serves no such function as the goddess is perched on her consort's thigh. Their sons Ganesa and Kumara sit gracefully on smaller lotuses attached to the pedestal. Soldered to a projection on the left foot of the pedestal is a kneeling female devotee.

As in most Siva images made in this region the god is ithyphallic. Two of his arms are broken at the wrist; with two others he fondles his consort's breast and caresses her cheek. This expression of conjugal intimacy is characteristic of Pala-period representations of the Uma-Mahesvara theme in Bihar and Bengal. The fond interaction of the two is exhibited not only by Siva's amorous advances but also by the turn of his body and blissful expression on Parvati's face. This lively dalliance is further subtly expressed by Siva's snake, which appears from behind his shoulders to observe the action.

Although differences between Bihari and Bengali versions of the subject are not easily discernible, very likely this bronze is from the Gaya District as it shows a kinship with Kurkihar bronzes from the tenth century. A late tenth-century date is suggested by a comparison with a bronze Uma-Mahesvara dedicated in Kurkihar around the mid-tenth century (Huntington 1984, fig. 47). It appears that the finial above Siva's matted hair and crest of his diadem originally were inlaid with semiprecious stones. Rather unusual is the sensitive rendering of the donor. Not only does she wear a scarf around her head as more commonly seen in Kashmir, but her face has an individuality rarely encountered in such figures.





80 *The Story of the Golden Gander*
Bihar, Gaya District; tenth century
Schist; 11 in (28.0 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by the Smart Family Foundation through the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Edgar G. Richards
M.86.306
Literature: Bautze-Picron, 1987; Leoshko forthcoming.

The inscription on the relief reads: "*haṁsa jataka*" (birth story of the gander). Jatakas, originally written in Pali and Sanskrit, are moralistic stories of the previous births of Buddha Sakyamuni and were very popular with artists in early India. After the Gupta period they seem to have lost their appeal among Indian Buddhists but continued to be popular in Burma and Sri Lanka. This particular representation is the only one known example from the Pala period, and very likely the segment formed part of a larger composition, perhaps along the base of a Buddhist shrine. Gray-brown schist commonly was used in the Bodhgaya region, where jatakas may have been favored by Theravada Buddhists, who seemed to have controlled the Bodhgaya temple.

According to the jataka, Buddha Sakyamuni and his principal disciple, Ānanda, were born in a previous life as the king and chief minister of a herd of golden geese and were known respectively as Dhṛitarāshṭra and Sumukha. Desirous of seeing the geese, Brahmadatta, king of Varanasi, set his fowler to catch one. Rather than allowing his monarch to be caught, Sumukha offered himself to the fowler. Impressed by his attitude, the fowler released the royal gander. The birds, however, insisted that they be taken before the king. The fowler complied, and the two noble ganders explained to the king the virtues of rightful rule.

The story unfolds in the relief with utmost brevity. The human king with hands folded reverently kneels before the two ganders, who are placed on pedestals to indicate their divine status. The larger of the two birds is the king of the geese and the other his minister. This compositional formula can be traced at least to the fifth-century murals in the cave temples in Ajanta.



*81 A Votive Tablet*
Bihar, Gaya District (?); tenth century
Terra-cotta; 3⅝ in (9.2 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Phillips
M.82.165.5

Such terra-cotta votive tablets were produced in large quantities for the important Buddhist monasteries. They served a variety of functions, as souvenirs for pilgrims, icons for portable shrines, and models for artists as well as for insertion into images or stupas to enhance their potency. This much-abraded example displays an enthroned preaching Buddha surrounded by a flame aureole.



*82 The Bodhisattva Maitreya*
Bihar, Gaya District; eleventh century
Schist; 33 in (83.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.69.13.7
Literature: LACMA 1975, pp. 27, 149, no. 13; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 121; Pal 1985, p. 76, no. 18.

A broken right forearm and slight abrasion on the chest mar this otherwise perfectly preserved sculpture. The stone links the stele to the Bodhgaya region, where gray-brown schist was quite commonly used. A companion piece representing the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara is now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston (Heeramaneck 1979, no. 120). Both originally would have flanked a larger image of a seated Buddha in an important shrine.

Regally ornamented, yet sporting an ascetic's matted chignon, the elegant figure is seated gracefully on a lotus. His right hand probably was attached to his chest where the abrasion occurs and would have displayed the gesture of teaching (*vyākhyāṇamudrā*) or reassurance. The left hand holds the stalk of a *nāgakeśara* flower. Almost hidden in the flower is an ascetic's tiny waterpot containing the elixir of eternal life. Lodged in his matted hair is a diminutive stupa symbolizing the religion he will preach as the future Buddha (see Bhattacharya 1980).

The sculpture represents the Pala style at its zenith. The empty space around the body not only enhances the sense of volume but emphasizes the rhythmic flow of the outline. The supple and suave form of the bodhisattva seems to echo the pliancy of the delicate plant that he holds at his side. His ornaments, hair, and clothing are rendered with remarkable plasticity and precision. The sensitivity of the sculptor is evident not only in Maitreya's beatific expression but also in the restraint with which he has lightly etched the exuberantly stylized flame pattern along the edge of the aureole so as not to overcrowd the composition. (For a stylistically related triad also from the Bodhgaya region see Huntington 1984, figs. 120–22.)



*83 The God Mahakala*
Bihar; 1000–1050
Schist; 14¼ in (36.2 cm)
Gift of Paul F. Walter
M.71.110.3
Literature: Pal 1971, p. 99; Pal 1974a, pp. 7, 45, no. 4; Pal 1977b, p. 101, fig. 7.



Bhairava and Mahakala are the two most popular epithets of Siva to denote his angry manifestation. Hindus and Buddhists worship this form of Siva and virtually use the same image. While Hindus use both names, although Bhairava is the more common, Buddhists generally prefer Mahakala. This relief fortunately contains a dedicatory inscription, which, although not altogether legible, indicates that the god represented is the Buddhist Mahakala. This is also supported by the presence of the kneeling figure who appears to be a monk, indicated by his Buddhalike hairstyle. According to the inscription, he is Nanuḍika, son of Śoañjana.

Mahakala is conceived as a plump dwarf with a generous paunch overflowing his dhoti. Apart from displaying his wrath by rolling his eyes and raising his eyebrows, his fearsome nature also is denoted by a garland of skulls and a snake in his hair and another serving as his sacred cord. A Buddhist iconographic text describes him: "He looks terrible with bare fangs, and decked in ornaments of serpents and a sacred thread made out of a snake. He is short and from his mouth trickles forth blood" (B. Bhattacharyya 1958, p. 345). Mahakala's attributes are a chopper, sword, trident, and skull cup.

Mahakala's favorite habitat is Sitavana, the awesome cremation ground near Bodhgaya. This stele may well have been carved there. Few stone Mahakalas have survived, and comparative material is rare (Huntington 1984, fig. 150; Kramrisch 1981, p. 35, no. 30). The paleography of the inscription generally agrees with the Varanasi pedestal inscription of a sculpture of Mahipala I of 1026, now in the Sarnath Museum (Huntington 1984, fig. 58). Thus a date in the first half of the eleventh century for this sculpture is not unlikely.

The aureole has been conceived as a fiery mandala. While usually the flames are delineated along the edges in smaller size but with greater volume, here the sculptor has resorted to a more abstract, graphic pattern. Two large cups for offerings are placed on the base, while a censer balances the donor figure on the other side.

*84 The God Agni*
Bihar; eleventh century
Copper alloy; 4½ in (11.4 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Phillips
M.79.189.8



Although two of his attributes are missing as well as his mount, the figure can be identified as Agni, the fire god. Agni is usually represented with a beard and holding a rosary and waterpot; his mount is a goat [89]. Here he has four arms and holds against his chest a rosary and very likely once held a waterpot in his lower-left hand. The broken object in the upper-right hand probably was a sacrificial ladle used to pour clarified butter, a common attribute of Brahma [78]. More intriguing is the implement in his upper-left hand, clearly a pair of tongs. While this is not an inappropriate object for the god of fire, it is rarely associated with him in written texts or images. His animal mount may have been represented on the snakelike projection at the lotus base.

Agni is an important divinity in Vedic religion and literature. In the Hindu pantheon, however, he is a minor figure, like Brahma and Indra, and is worshiped as the presiding deity of the southeast. Since the Dikpalas, the eight guardian gods of the directions, are generally depicted as a group, independent images of Agni are rather rare. It is possible that this image belonged to a group depiction of the Dikpalas.

The god's minor position did not influence the sculptor of this bronze in any way. Not only has he given us a well-proportioned figure with a handsome mien, but he has rendered the details with finesse. The elegant fingers and matted locks are exquisitely delineated, and the tongs, which the sculptor must have used daily during the casting process, are depicted realistically.

85 *The Cosmic Form of Avalokiteshvara*
Bihar; eleventh century
Copper alloy inlaid with silver, copper, precious stones; 4⅝ in (11.7 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.7
Literature: Trubner 1950, p. 84, no. 138; Pal 1966, p. 86, no. 93; Schroeder 1982, pp. 288–89, no. 72d; Pal 1982a, pp. 18–19, fig. 11.

Known commonly as the eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara, this image represents the cosmic form of the bodhisattva. Considering his popularity in Nepal, Tibet, China, and Japan, few Indian representations have been discovered. The earliest Indian image occurs at a cave temple in Kanheri, near Bombay (see Pal 1982a for a detailed discussion of the eleven-headed Avalokiteshvara). This diminutive bronze is the only known sculptural representation of the subject from eastern India.

Apart from its rarity, this particular image also reflects significant iconographic variations. Usually the god is represented as standing, but here he is seated in the yogic posture as in some Chinese paintings from Dunhuang. In this cosmic manifestation the god generally has six, eight, or one thousand arms, but here he is given four. (The sixth-century Kanheri image also has four arms, while some Tang-period Chinese figures have only two.) His attributes—gesture of charity, rosary, lotus, and waterpot—are not unusual.

The heads of the figure account for another unique feature. In such images in Nepal and Tibet nine heads usually are arranged in diminishing size in three rows of three, each with a placid mien. The tenth head above the nine is of an angry god, while the eleventh head at the summit is of his parental Buddha Amitabha. Here, however, the artist has arranged five heads in a circle at the bottom, followed successively by three, two, and a single head at the top. The head at the summit curiously is not of a Buddha but is like the other ten. There are various symbolical explanations for the eleven heads. One possibility is an iconographic transference of the concept of a group of gods known in the Vedic religion as the Eleven Rudras. Another is that the heads represent the eight directions along with the zenith, the center and the nether region, thereby emphasizing the pervasiveness of the cosmic form.

The distinctive arrangement of the heads displays the inventiveness of the sculptor. He must also have been well paid for his effort for he has enriched the surface of this figure with a meticulous inlay of silver, copper, rubies, and turquoise. One does not often encounter Pala-period bronzes inlaid with silver and copper, although many Kurkihar and Nalanda bronzes must once have been encrusted with precious and semiprecious stones. That the bronze is inlaid with turquoise may indicate a Tibetan provenance for Tibetans are enormously fond of this material. Otherwise, however, it strongly reflects the eleventh-century style of Bihar.





*86 The Transcendental Buddha Akshobhya*
Bihar; c. 1100
Gilt copper alloy with color; 9½ in (24.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.78.9.18
Literature: Rowland 1963, pp. 22, 133; Pal 1966, p. 74, no. 67; Pal 1974a, pp. 22, 48, no. 19.

Although the figure is depicted as a bodhisattva with an ascetic's chignon rather than the hairstyle of a Buddha [see 70], is richly ornamented, and does not wear monk's robes, he can be identified as a transcendental Buddha for two reasons. His outstretched right hand makes the earth-touching gesture, which is given only to Sakyamuni or Akshobhya and never to a bodhisattva. Moreover the elephant represented twice on either side of the lotus stem is a symbol of Akshobhya. Representations of the five transcendental Buddhas as bodhisattvas, rare in India, are known in early Tibetan paintings (see Pal 1984, pp. 134–35, no. P2, for a depiction of the Buddha Ratnasambhava where an animal, the horse, also is portrayed twice). Such images were used in rituals related to Yogatantra, a highly esoteric technique of meditation.

Not only is this a rare Pala-period representation of this Buddha form, but it also provides an Indian prototype for early Tibetan depictions. Its peculiar features include the unusual lotus with stem and foliage, rather amusing elephants, which appear to be suspended in air, and distinctive circular base. The body of the base has been delineated as aquatic foliage with areas completely cut out to give the forms greater relief. Noteworthy also is the bold flame design along the aureole edge. A festooned parasol crowns the top of the aureole. The decorative exuberance of the base and aureole, characteristic of Pala-period sculptures of the eleventh to twelfth centuries, is restrained by the empty space behind the Buddha, which allows us to better appreciate the subtle, plastic qualities of the modeling.

87 *The Bodhisattva Manjusri*
Bihar; twelfth century
Gilt copper alloy; 3⅞ in (9.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.75.4.9
Literature: Dohanian 1961, no. 49; Pal 1966, p. 76, no. 72.

The bodhisattva of wisdom, Manjusri, is represented here as a princely figure seated in *mahārājalilāsana* (posture of regal grace). This presumably was the favorite posture of monarchs when they sat on thrones and was adopted by artists in their representation of divine figures. The body sways prominently to the left and is supported by the left hand resting on the lotus base. This hand also holds a blue lotus stalk, the blossom of which supports a book, a principal attribute of the bodhisattva. His right arm is placed languidly on his right knee, emphasizing his relaxed attitude.

The exaggerated déhanchement echoes the sinuosity of the plant. Not only does the figure assume a graceful posture, but its elegance is emphasized further by the subtle modeling. The broad face and pronounced sway of the body are features of twelfth-century sculptures from the area [see 71].



# Bengal

88 *A Buddha*



*88 A Buddha*
Bengal, Chittagong District; ninth century
Copper alloy; 4⅞ in (12.4 cm)
Gift of Michael Phillips
M.80.228.11

This meditating Buddha with his right hand extended in the earth-touching gesture may represent either Buddha Sakyamuni at the moment of his enlightenment or Buddha Akshobhya. The latter identification is more likely. In images symbolizing the enlightenment a branch of the bodhi tree usually is added at the top of the nimbus [see 75]. The Buddha's oval halo is fringed by a boldly delineated flame motif.

The bronze is said to have been found in Bangladesh and is stylistically related to others found in a hoard in Jhewari, Chittagong District. Among the Jhewari bronzes a large group represents Buddha figures (see D. Mitra 1982, figs. 1–30). The seated Buddha images from Jhewari can be divided into two groups by whether or not the ends of the drapery are folded on the left shoulder. In this particular example no such folds are shown. Characteristic also of Jhewari bronze Buddhas is their rather thick eyelids. Unlike most other Jhewari bronzes, the torso and face of this Buddha are considerably elongated. The lips are much smaller, and the eyebrows more raised and arched. In keeping with the elongated face and head the nimbus is a perfect oval unlike the more circular halos common in Jhewari bronzes. These difference make this a unique bronze Buddha that is generally related to the Jhewari group of bronzes but may have been created in another center in the Chittagong District.



*89a–b The God Agni*
Bengal

*a,* ninth century
Copper alloy; 8¼ in (21.0 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence R. Phillips
M.81.275

*b,* eleventh century
Copper alloy; 11⅛ in (28.1 cm)
Given anonymously
M.87.

The present condition of the damaged bronze (a) is due to its having been in a fire. It is said to have been found somewhere in Bangladesh. Stylistically it seems to be a fairly early bronze as is evident by the simple, sparsely ornamented figure and base [see 88]. It is comparable to a stone Agni found among the ruins of Paharpur, Bihar (Saraswati 1962, fig. 18). While Saraswati dates this sculpture to the seventh century, Asher (1980, p. 93) places it in the eighth. Although the Paharpur Agni is not bearded and is shown standing, the proportions and plastic qualities of the two figures are remarkably similar. Moreover the broad flames in the bronze aureole seem to be a metal version of those in the Paharpur stele. There too Agni has only two arms and holds a rosary and waterpot.

A comparison with the later Agni from Bihar [84] clearly demonstrates the iconographic and stylistic differences between the two bronzes. The Bengali bronze Agni has a pot-bellied figure, appropriate to a brahman, whereas the Bihari depiction is regally ascetic. Except for the flaming aureole, which has been aptly emphasized, the charred Agni is essentially a human figure. In the Bihari bronze his divinity is stressed by the additional arms. The two figures differ also in the way they sit, and the Bengali sculptor has added an animal, very likely

89a



a goat, between the god's feet. Both gods are bearded and have pleasing expressions, the Bengali Agni may even have been smiling.

The second and more impressive bronze [*b*] is also from Bengal but was made later, as indicated by the elaborately tiered pedestal. When complete, it must have had at least two other figures on the small lotuses (only one lotus remains) attached to the sides. An elaborate halo would have further enhanced the sculpture's magnificence. As in the Bihari example [84] the god sits gracefully as a dignified figure. His rosary and waterpot attributes, however, are characteristic of an ascetic brahman. He is also given only two arms as in the earlier Bengali representation [*a*] rather than the four in the Bihari bronze. Stylistically these two Agnis from Bengal differ considerably and were very likely made in different areas. The larger bronze may be from northern Bengal and is one of the most imposing metal representations of Agni to have survived from the region.

89b



90a–b *The God Vishnu*
Bengal, Chittagong

*a*, c. 800
Copper alloy; 5¾ in (14.6 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Phillips
M.79.189.10

*b*, 850–900
Copper alloy; 9½ in (24.0 cm)
Given anonymously
M.87.272.2

Although they differ iconographically, both bronzes represent the god Vishnu. In the smaller example [*a*] the god stands rigidly on a lotus, and in *b* he is seated gracefully in the *maharajalila* posture on a lotus throne supported by his mount Garuda. The implication is that Vishnu is flying through the air to inspect his realm as the preserver of the universe. While this representation was popular in other regions, this particular posture and configuration appealed to the sculptors of Bengal and is found in stone and metal depictions. As is customary for such images the lower-right arm of the god would have rested on his knee. The other hands hold the wheel, conch, and club. In addition the wheel and club are repeated again on the base, an unusual feature. Like his master, Garuda too is given four arms. Two arms support the throne. The second right hand is held against the chest, and the object in the lower-left hand may have been a waterpot.

No Garuda is included in the earlier bronze [*a*]. Vishnu places his lower-right hand on the wheel and lower-left hand on the conch. The upper-right hand almost certainly held the lotus seed, but the identification of the fourth attribute in the upper-left hand, which should be the club, is problematic. Here the object looks more like a noose, garland, or rosary and is also not recognizable in a similar bronze published by Casey (1985, p. 32, no. 7), who writes that both hold Vishnu's "traditional attributes." Otherwise the figure conforms to the iconography of Vishnu.

Casey attributes that bronze to the late eighth century and to the Chittagong District. These two bronzes probably were made in the same atelier about the same time. The workmanship of this example seems somewhat superior, especially in the modeling of the form and graceful delineation of the hands and fingers. Moreover, while the facial features of the other figures, dominated by wide staring eyes, are somewhat crudely rendered as in later bronzes from Jhewari [92], they are more refined in this Vishnu. Otherwise in both bronzes the lower hands are placed in a similar fashion on the attributes resting on lotuses (and not pedestals as described by Casey). The lotus stalks rise rather stiffly like columns in the other bronze, whereas they are rendered as graceful plants in this example. In both the edge of the aureole is fringed with beads rather than a flame design and there is an additional inner border with an undulating motif. Common to these two bronzes but significantly different from the more typical eleventh-century Bengali Vishnu images [100a] are the distinctive shape of the lotus on which the god stands, plain rectangular base, and design of the crown. The festooned umbrella characteristic of Jhewari bronzes [92] is missing.

Stylistically the impressive seated Vishnu [*b*] is certainly from the same region, perhaps made somewhat later. Although this Vishnu is more graceful, both figures are similarly modeled and proportioned. They have similar crowns and jewelry and metal composition and patina. The more elaborate larger bronze [*b*] with the additional arms of Garuda and more ornate throne design and flame motif suggests that it was made later.

90a





90b

*91 The Goddess Marichi*
Bengal, Chittagong District (?); tenth century
Sandstone; 15½ in (36.9 cm)
Gift of Tom and Nancy Juda
M.83.140



Within a typically Bengali shrine are animated representations of five goddesses. The principal figure, much larger than the others and with three heads and eight arms is Marichi, Buddhist goddess of light. Conceptually she is the Buddhist counterpart of the Hindu sun god Surya [131], but differs from him both theologically and iconographically. In this particular form she is known as Ashṭabhujā (eight-armed) or Saṁkhiptā (brief; abbreviated; attenuated) Marichi. The name Marichi is probably derived from the word *marichi,* meaning "ray of light"; Marichin is also an epithet of the sun. Like the sun god, Marichi rides a chariot drawn by seven animals, pigs instead of horses, and is occasionally shown triumphing over Rahu, the eclipse-causing demon; both these features are omitted here.

The iconography of this image otherwise closely agrees with the textual description in the *Sādhanamālā,* compiled at least as early as 1165 (B. Bhattacharyya 1958, pp. 210–12). As stated in the text, she is represented in the cavity of a chaitya. Of her three faces, the one on the left is of a sow. A virginal, youthful figure, she stands in the militant *alidha* posture and displays several attributes. In her lowermost pair of hands she holds the needle and thread with which she sews up the mouths of the wicked. At the same time she strikes them with the elephant goad as she holds them with the noose (broken left hand against her breast). She pierces them with an arrow let loose from the bow and shatters their hearts with the thunderbolt held in her upper-right hand. She then sprinkles water with the leaves of the *asoka* plant held in her upper-left hand. The *asoka* has also been added to decorate the finial of the shrine, which is crowned by the sun and moon.

Two angels fly on either side with garlands. The four bellicose figures near her feet are her companion goddesses Varttālī, Vāḍālī, Vārālī, and Varāhamukhī, the sow-faced figure. One is clearly shooting an arrow, presumably to dispel darkness as do the female companions of Surya [131].

The sculpture is said to have come from Mainamati, Chittagong District, an important Buddhist site during the Pala period. Mainamati, however, is not rich in stone images. Close in iconography and style is a stele from Faridpur District, Bangladesh (Huntington 1984, fig. 213), dated to the early eleventh century and slightly more elaborate than this image. There too the four companions are similarly represented as diminutive, aggressive figures. Although conceptually related to the sun god, the image seems to have been modeled on the figure of the Hindu goddess Durga as the destroyer of the buffalo demon.

92 *The Goddess Sri-Devi*
Bengal, Chittagong District; tenth century
Patinated copper alloy; 7⅛ in (18.1 cm)
Gift of Doris and Ed Wiener
M.72.108.4
Literature: Pal 1974a, pp. 11, 46, no. 8; Mukherjee 1976, pp. 193–95; Mukherjee 1979, p. 46, fig. 82; D. Mitra 1982, p. 112, figs. 91, 93.

The inscription on the base of the bronze identifies the figure as Sri-Devi, the goddess Sri. Sri or Sri-Lakshmi usually is considered as the Hindu goddess of wealth and prosperity and is adored by Buddhists and Jains. Conceptually she is related to the Buddhist goddess of wealth, Vasudhara. The Buddhist association of this bronze is made clear not only by the Buddhist creed written on a medallion and attached at the back (see D. Mitra 1982) but also by the fact that she holds a sheaf of grain with her left hand as does Vasudhara [95]. Lakshmi generally is shown holding a lotus with her left hand. Moreover Vasudhara's name frequently is preceded by the epithet *śrí* in literature (see Pal 1967, p. 43). The three pellets in her outstretched right hand are very likely gems signifying wealth.

That the sculpture is from Jhewari is in no doubt (see D. Mitra 1982). Scholars, however, argue about its date. While Mukherjee (in S. K. Mitra 1979, fig. 82) dates it to the ninth century, citing the paleography, D. Mitra (1982) categorically states that "the image is not earlier than the eleventh to twelfth century." An almost identical bronze, although more sophisticated, is dated by Huntington (1984, fig. 260) to the mid-ninth century, while Casey (1985, pp. 32–33) dates two stylistically similar bronzes to the late eighth–mid-ninth centuries. Mukherjee again dates two closely related bronzes to the tenth century (S. K. Mitra 1979, figs. 91–92), even though all three were made probably in the same workshop at the same time. A ninth-century date seems rather early compared with the Vishnu [90], and the tenth century suits the evidence better.



93 *A Recumbent Lady*
Bengal; early eleventh century
Schist; 7⅜ in (18.7 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.86.338.6

Reliefs with a recumbent female and child have been found in central and eastern India. Most belong to the tenth–eleventh centuries, although a few terra-cotta examples date to the prehistoric period. The group from eastern India, mostly from Bengal, seems to be iconographically more homogenous than those from central India, where the goddess is on occasion provided with a serpent hood and Saiva emblems such as the linga and Ganesa (Lee 1970, p. 30, no. 19). The east Indian reliefs are usually quite elaborate and include several attendants, the nine planetary deities, and various emblems (Trivedi 1974, figs. 1–3). Trivedi has suggested that these stelae depict the myth of Siva's incarnation as Grihapati (Lord of the home) in the womb of a childless brahman woman called Suchismatī. If this identification is accepted, then the recumbent woman is a mortal bearing a divine child. Such images were worshiped mostly by childless couples. Not all scholars agree with this identification, and some (Huntington 1984, fig. 248) continue to identify the child as Sadyojata (Newborn) Siva and the mother as Gauri. This seems absurd for Gauri is the spouse rather than the mother of Siva.

By comparison with most east Indian versions the museum's example is both simple and problematic. No child is included in the relief, and the lady stretches herself out gracefully on a bed. Her head is propped up by a cushion and supported by her left hand; a second cushion supports her feet. The bedspread is indicated by cross-hatchings. Behind her is a Sivalinga and small figure of Ganesa seated on a lotus. It is difficult to assume that the sculptor omitted the infant inadvertently. Thus one cannot be certain that this stele was intended to represent the legend of Grihapati. Nevertheless it probably was set up by a lady to increase her fertility.

The relative simplicity of the stele may indicate a date earlier than that of the more elaborate eleventh-century presentations. The carving, however, is not as refined, making it likely a product of a provincial center. Although it is attributed here to Bengal, it could have been sculpted in Bihar. A stylistically similar stele in a private collection in Calcutta may be a mate to this example (Bhattasali 1929, pl. LIV). In shape and size the two reliefs are similar as are the two supine ladies. Moreover that stele shows a similar iconographic simplicity and includes only the Sivalinga and an infant below the lady's left arm. The paleographical features of the inscription on that piece indicate a date around 1000.



*94a–c The Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara*

*a,* Bengal; eleventh century
Copper alloy inlaid with silver; 4 in (10.2 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Zimmerman
M.84.171.2

*b,* Bengal or Bihar; eleventh century
Brass; 5 3/16 in (13.2 cm)
Gift of Anna C. Walter
M.83.220.3

*c,* Bengal; twelfth century
Brass; 5 1/16 in (12.9 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.75.4.11
Literature: Trubner 1950, p. 36, no. 61; Dohanian 1961, no. 27; Rosenfield 1966, p. 77, no. 74.

94a



94b



94c



These three bronzes represent the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara in his simplest form. In his left hand he holds the lotus blossom, his most distinctive attribute, and the right hand is extended in the gesture of charity. In addition he can be identified by the effigy of Buddha Amitabha attached to his matted hair [see 76]. A second blossom is affixed behind the right arm of the seated figure [*a*].

Except for the posture of *a,* the three representations are iconographically identical. A comparison of the three, however, demonstrates how even within so stringent a tradition sculptors introduced variations in form and detail. Each figure differs noticeably in proportion and posture. While in *a–b* the *tribhaṅga* (triple bend of the body) is restrained and naturalistic, in *c* the right hip protrudes prominently to exaggerate the déhanchement. The form of *a* is not as encumbered with sashes and jewelry as in *b–c.* The artist has also added silver to the sacred cord, eyes, and auspicious mark. In *b* very likely semiprecious stones were inset into the ear ornaments and empty cups at the top of the matted hair and among the folds of the dhoti. No such inlay was used in *c.* Only the bodhisattva in *b* wears a sash tied diagonally across the legs, which should impede his ability to walk; in *c* the figure wears a long scarf that hangs down either leg.



95 *The Goddess Vasudhara*
Bengal; eleventh century
Copper alloy; 6 in (15.3 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes Fund
M.75.17
Literature: Larson et al. 1980, p. 46, no. 9.



Vasudhara is represented as a fully endowed figure gracefully seated in *lalitasana* on a lotus. Appropriately crowned and ornamented, she has six arms. Beginning with the lower right and moving clockwise, her attributes are the gesture of charity with a gem, sheaf of gems, gesture of adoration, book placed on a lotus, sheaf of grain, and waterpot. Thus not only is she the bestower of prosperity and fertility but also of knowledge, combining the qualities of Lakshmi and Sarasvati.

While images of Vasudhara are not unknown in east Indian Buddhist art of the Pala period, she is generally represented with two or four arms. Her six-armed variety is extremely rare, this being one of only two known portrayals. An eleventh-century Nepali manuscript includes a representation of the six-armed form identified as Vasudhara of Kāñchīnagara (Pal 1967). Kanchinagara is very likely modern Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, from where this iconographic form may have been introduced. In Nepal this particular form of Vasudhara became the common Buddhist household goddess as Lakshmi is the favorite goddess in a Hindu home.

96 *The God Heruka*
Bengal; eleventh century
Gilt copper alloy; 6¼ in (15.9 cm)
Purchased with Harry and Yvonne Lenart Funds
M.85.115.3



Although this image does not precisely agree with known iconographic descriptions of the god, very likely the figure represents Heruka or Hevajra. An important deity of esoteric Buddhism, Heruka is the presiding deity of the *Herukatantra* (dates unknown). His prescribed attributes are the thunderbolt, skull cup, festooned cot's leg, and garland of severed heads.

In this image the skull cup has been replaced with the bell and the hands are crossed against the chest in *vajrahūmkāramudrā* (thunderbolt-sound gesture). He is given three heads, each distinguished by a prominent third eye and protruding fangs. Furthermore he is shown dancing in *ardhaparyaṇka,* with the right leg raised and folded, atop four naked male bodies stacked one on top of the other. Very likely these are corpses, although the text prescribes that he should be dancing on one corpse only (B. Bhattacharyya 1958, p. 156).

The few surviving Indian representations of Heruka are in stone (Saraswati 1977, figs. 171–72; Huntington 1984, fig. 215). In these published examples the one-headed god dances on one corpse only and brandishes the thunderbolt with his right hand. The museum's image with three heads and displaying an unusual gesture probably follows a different iconographic tradition. Noteworthy also is the downward orientation of Heruka's face as if he were intently gazing at someone or some object as in the dancing Siva [99]. Whatever the theological significance of such forms they are Buddhist counterparts of the Hindu Siva, with whom Heruka shares many features. The postures and gesture, however, are peculiarly Buddhist.



97 *The God Revanta*
Bengal; eleventh century
Copper alloy; 4½ in (11.4 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by Christian Humann
M.86.61.1





Although small, this bronze altarpiece is a unique east Indian representation of Revanta. Introduced sometime during the Gupta period, Revanta remained popular in northern India as a patron deity of horse traders. In mythology he is regarded as a son of Surya, and like him Revanta is represented with boots and riding a horse.

In elaborate stone reliefs Revanta is shown riding a horse as he returns from a successful hunt, accompanied by companions carrying the spoils of the hunt and playing various instruments (see Pal 1986, p. 255, no. S132). Not only are metal representations of the god rare, but in none is encountered so elaborate a tableau. Moreover it is rare to depict the god riding his horse en face. A well-known stone representation of a similar figure, perhaps also depicting Revanta, is in the sun temple in Konarak (Zimmer [1960] 1966, 2: 371). This mode of representation, however, was known in the northwest [28].

Like the sun god, Revanta is given a tall crown but does not hold lotuses. Instead he grasps a small curved dagger, drinking cup, and the reins of his horse. The dagger usually hangs from his hip. The two musicians in front play wind instruments, at the back are a drummer and parasol bearer. While the human figures are quite charming, the horse is conceptually rendered and seems almost immobile.



*98 The Goddess Shadakshari Mahavidya*
Bengal; eleventh century
Copper alloy inlaid with silver and overlaid with traces of silver; 3⅞ in (9.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.6
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 81, no. 85; Schroeder 1982, pp. 68–69, no. 68e.

This figure has been identifed by Schroeder (1982) as Bhrikuti, a form of the goddess Tara and attendant of Avalokiteshvara. The iconography, however, suggests that she represents Shadakshari Mahavidya and is a companion of Shadakshari Lokesvara [see 106], a tantric manifestation of Avalokiteshvara. The expression *shadaksharī* literally means "six syllables," and six is the number of syllables in Avaloiteshvara's well-known mantra, *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ*. The word *mahāvidyā* means "great knowledge." Thus Shadakshari Mahavidya personifies the great knowledge, which is the mantra of six syllables.

As part of a triadic composition she would have been placed on the left of the bodhisattva. She exhibits the same attributes as does Lokesvara. Two of her hands are engaged in making *añjalimudrā,* and in her other two hands she holds the rosary and stem of the lotus blossom. An unusual feature is the tiny stupa in her crown, which is not prescribed in known texts.

One of the finest Pala-period metal sculptures in the collection, the figure was once plated in silver as is the right breast. In addition silver has also been used to enrich the wide pectoral, stupa, eyes, forehead mark, and sacred cord. While gilding and silver inlay were common, silver-plated images are quite rare. The corroded surface does not detract from the subtle modeling. Notwithstanding the twists and bends of the body, her posture is not strained and she appears as an embodiment of poise and dignity.



99 *Siva as Lord of the Dance*
Bengal; eleventh century
Phyllite; 12¾ in (32.4 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by Thomas and Margaux Pritzker
M.87.105



This elegant dancing figure represents the east Indian version of Naṭeśa or Nrityeśvara (Siva as lord of the dance). Although the theme is not unknown in Bihar, most surviving examples are from Bangladesh, where it was especially popular in the Dacca and Tipperah districts. This particular example very likely is from that region and may be the only known representation of this theme in an American collection.

The most significant difference between the dancing Sivas from eastern and central India is that in those from eastern India he dances on his bull, who also dances along with his master while looking up at him in admiration (Bhattasali 1929, pls. XLII–XLIII; Sivaramamurti 1974, figs. 171–74, 179–81). This Siva originally would have danced on the bull. Also in Bengal Siva's principal hands exhibit gestures of the dance or are engaged in playing the vina. This figure probably represents the vina-playing variety, which emphasizes Siva as lord of dance and music. This is clear from the position of the principal left arm, support near the left shoulder, broken portion above the left breast, where the vina would have been attached, and support for the instrument on the right thigh. Furthermore the pot and cup held by the two remaining hands are also held by vina-playing Sivas.

The posture assumed by the god is common to central and east Indian images [see 40]. Perhaps because of the bull's expressiveness and the figure's swirling arms, these east Indian versions remain the most lively representations of this particular manifestation of Siva. Like central Indian figures Siva is invariably shown with an erect phallus. A minor, but noteworthy difference is that in east Indian images Siva often looks down as he dances, apparently watching the ecstatic behavior of his favorite bull. The dancing bull also adds a comic touch, thereby making the occasion less somber as it is in southern India and infusing the representations with a sense of joy. The stele behind Siva has been completely cut away, which not only enhances the volume of the figure but makes it appear more graceful and buoyant.

*100a–e* *The God Vishnu*

*a,* Bengal; c. 1025
Copper alloy; 14¼ (36.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.75.4.5
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 72, no. 65; Pal 1974a, pp. 14, 47, no. 11.

*b,* Bengal; c. 1075
Copper alloy; 4½ in (11.4 cm)
Gift of Anna C. Walter
M.83.220.2

*c,* Bengal; 1100–1150
Phylite; 16¼ in (41.1 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.85.133

*d,* Bengal or Bihar; c. 1150
Copper alloy; 7⅜ in (18.7 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Ramesh Kapoor
M.82.227

*e,* c. 1200 or later
Copper alloy; 2¾ in (7.0 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Phillips
M.79.189.4

100a



100b



100c



100d



100e



Created between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries, these five sculptures are typical representations of the god Vishnu in Bengal and Bihar. Countless such images in stone and bronze have survived. In most Vishnu is flanked by his consorts, Sri-Lakshmi and Sarasvati. Less common are images where the three deities are seated [*e*]. Of the five examples only one is stone [*c*]. Almost certainly three of the bronzes are from Bengal, and one may be from Bihar [*d*]. Stylistically it is close to a bronze discovered from Fatehpur, Gaya District, Bihar (Huntington 1984, fig. 192), but is also related to similar images from Bengal (Casey 1985, pls. 44–45). The Fatehpur bronze could in fact have been taken to Bihar from Bengal.

With one exception [*b*], all include Vishnu's consorts and mount Garuda. The most elaborate is the stone stele [*c*], from which one can also glean an idea of the luxuriant decoration preferred by east Indian sculptors after the tenth century. Further the stele includes two diminutive attendants of the goddesses; an elaborate shrine in relief with lions, makaras, and ganders; flying angels; face of glory at the apex; and meandering floral motif along the base. By comparison the bronzes are simpler, with only the addition of a tiny representation of a donor attached to the pedestal of *a*. When the deities are shown standing on lotuses in the metal images the aureoles frame the figures so that Vishnu seems to be modeled in the round. Only he is provided with a lotus nimbus. The background is never cut away in the stone relief. In the bronze [*e*], where the deities are seated, there is no aureole, and the composition is quite characteristic of such images. The high lotus stand or pedestal has an hourglass shape on which Vishnu sits on a similarly shaped lotus. Two stems branch out on either side from the pedestal to support two more blossoms that serve as seats for the goddesses.

Vishnu's attributes in such images are the lotus blossom or seed, gesture of charity, club, conch, and wheel. The order in which these attributes are held often varies according to which emanational form is intended. Attempts to identify the images more precisely are fruitless, since the textual descriptions do not uniformly describe Vishnu's permutations. For example, on the back of *d* the expression *trivikaḥ* is inscribed twice on the base and aureole, which is unusual. This is very likely an abbreviation if not a corruption of the word *Trivikrama,* one of Vishnu's emanational forms. The arrangement of the attributes agrees with that prescribed for Trivikrama in the *Nāradīya Saṁhitā* (date unknown) but not in any other iconographic text (Krishna 1980, pp. 86–87). In three images [*a–c*] the arrangement agrees with the description of Trivikrama in the *Agnipurāṇa* (date unknown).

Always on Vishnu's right, Lakshmi holds the flywhisk with her right hand and lotus with her left. Sarasvati is occupied in playing the vina, and Garuda genuflects as he adores his master. Evolved probably in the tenth century, this compositional formula rarely varies in Bihar and Bengal and was also adopted in Orissa.

Aesthetically and technically the large and complete altarpiece [*a*] is a fine north Bengali example. The figures are elegant and well proportioned, and the details are rendered with clarity. Stylistically the bronze is close to sculptures that can be dated to the first half of the eleventh century (Huntington 1984, figs. 60–67). The damaged figure [*b*] and stone stele [*c*] lack the refinement of *a*. The two bronzes are not far removed from one another in date, and the stone stele must be attributed to the late eleventh century. The squat figures, extreme déhanchement of the two females, and decorative exuberance suggest a twelfth-century date for *d*. Somewhat unusual and distinctive is the shape of Vishnu's face, which is dominated by large, staring eyes and a crown. Finally the fifth piece [*e*], apart from being much worn, exhibits considerably cruder workmanship. It is very likely a product of a provincial workshop and was worshiped for a longer period.

*101 The God Surya*
Bengal; c. 1075
Copper alloy inlaid with gold and silver; 7¾ in (19.7 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes Fund
M.81.99

While Surya was a popular deity in Bihar and Bengal, metal images of the god are less common than those in stone. In this well-crafted example, probably from northern Bengal, the upright figure is framed by a characteristic flame aureole crowned by a finial composed of stylized floral motifs. The heart-shaped cavity at the crest was perhaps once enriched with a ruby, the favorite stone of the god. That the pedestal is meant to serve as a chariot is evident from the seven horses and charioteer in front. Surya's charioteer is supposed to be portrayed without legs but here as in other representations from the region not only are the legs shown but he genuflects exactly as does Vishnu's Garuda [100a].

As elsewhere in India Surya holds two lotuses and wears boots, but his cuirass or jacket is not in evidence. Moreover he is equipped with a small dagger under his left arm, an uncommon feature in east Indian representations. Only one other, much earlier, figure from Nalanda wears a dagger in a similar position (Huntington 1984, fig. 126).

The surface of the bronze is enriched with silver for the eyes and strips of gold on the chest and forehead, the exact significance of which is unclear. The inlaid vertical mark on the forehead is quite common in bronzes from Bihar and Bengal.

The closest stylistic parallel for this bronze is a Vishnu recovered from Mandoil, Bangladesh (Huntington 1984, fig. 68). The inscription on that bronze dates it to the fourth regnal year of King Vigrahapāla III (r. c. 1050–75).



*102 The Bodhisattva Manjusri*
Bengal; twelfth century
Copper alloy with gold and color; 9⅞ in (25.1 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.75.4.10
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, pp. 76–77, no. 73; Schroeder 1982, pp. 286–87, no. 71d.



The figure can be identified as the bodhisattva Manjusri because of the book placed on the lotus held in the left hand. The right hand exhibits the gesture of fearlessness, although the palm is not fully open. The stem of a second flower, not a lotus, rises sinuously from the base; the stylized flower seems to support a gem, an unusual feature for Manjusri [see 87]. A similar gem also adorns the summit of his tall chignon.

Compared with other contemporary bodhisattva figures [94a–c], this representation is unusually slim and tall. Moreover the stance is not quite naturalistic, the legs being somewhat stiff and columnar. The dhoti extends almost to the ankles, and the sash slips down below the right knee. The slightly rigid stance is more than compensated for by the exuberant undulation of the plant motifs.

The traces of gold on the face and neck and indigo on the hair indicate that the image once was used in Tibet. Whether it was made there, perhaps by an Indian artist, or taken there by a Tibetan or Indian monk from a monastery in Bengal cannot be ascertained. Both technically and stylistically the latter possibility is stronger.



*103a–b* *A Divine Mother and Child*
Bengal; twelfth century

*a*
Copper alloy; 4⅞ in (12.1 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Phillips
M.79.189.3

*b*
Copper alloy inlaid with silver;
3⅝16 in (8.3 cm)
Gift of Anna C. Walter
M.83.220.1



103a



The two bronzes depict a divine mother and her son. The animal attached at the side [*b*] is highly conceptual, but very likely the bull is intended. Normally the bull is the mount of Siva, but sometimes the animal is also associated with his spouse. If the animal, who is looking up at the goddess, is a bull, then the goddess must be identified as Parvati and the child as Kumara. On a stele from Bihar an identical goddess with child, but with two additional arms, is identified in the inscription as Purnesvari, Mistress of Fullness (Huntington 1984, fig. 80).

The inscription also helps date the Purnesvari stele to the second half of the twelfth century. Of the two bronzes in the collection the one without the aureole [*b*] is similar to the Purnesvari. In both the little boys are almost identical and reach out for the mother's breast with the right hand. The other bronze is probably of a slightly earlier date.

Although the bronzes are similar in style and iconography, they exhibit interesting differences. The most significant is the delineation of the boys. The child in *a* sits in the crook of his mother's left arm in a stiff, formal posture, his hands forming the gesture of adoration. Seated on his mother's lap, the other child is much more animated and naturalistic. The goddesses sit in the same posture, but in *a* the lotus is placed on a rectangular footed pedestal while in *b* the blossom rests on an oblong, ringed base. In *a* the lotus petals are incised, but in *b* they are somewhat crudely modeled. Another curious feature of *b* is the freestanding plant beside the animal. If this is meant to represent a banana plant, then the goddess may be precisely identified as Lalita [108], the Graceful One, a maternal aspect of Parvati popular in Bengal. Finally all three eyes in *b* are inlaid with silver, while the goddess in *a* does not have the third eye nor any inlaying. (For a similar representation of the same theme from Bangladesh see Casey 1985, p. 70. no. 41.)



*104 The Goddess Tara*
Bengal; twelfth century
Brass inlaid with silver; 6⅜ in (16.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.69.13.3
Literature: Trabold 1975, pp. 23–24, no. 23.

The small metal figure of the goddess Tara iconographically is comparable with the earlier, more impressive stone example from Bihar [73], with one exception. Here a second, open lotus is attached to the right arm, which is usually encountered in Tara images after the tenth century. In both instances the blossom is the blue lotus. In this example the scarf and garment are of the same material.

Just as the iconographic differences between the ninth-century image and this twelfth-century representation are minor, so also are their stylistic distinctions. Most notable are the proportions of the figures. The stomach and pelvis of the stone Tara are much broader and heavier than that of the metal figure. Quite distinctive also are the shape and features of the faces. The face in the bronze is much broader, and the eyes and eyebrows are more emphatically curved. Also the half-shut eyes in the stone sculpture make the facial expression more introspective and remote, whereas the bronze goddess seems more approachable. The dot on the forehead is much more prominent in the later figure, and the bun of her hair falls on her left shoulder rather than being tied on top of her head. The jewelry too is different. As usual with metal sculptures of the later Pala period much of the ornamentation has been inlaid with silver. The bronze is stylistically related to a stone image of a goddess dedicated in the last quarter of the twelfth century (Huntington, 1984, fig. 80).



*105 The Dancing Ganesa*
Bengal; c. 1150
Phyllite; 25¾ in (65.8 cm)
The Phil Berg Collection
M.71.73.143
Literature: Bowie 1965, no. 6, pl. 21; Davidson 1968, p. 55, no. 68; Berg 1971, pp. 92–93, no. 149; Heeramaneck 1979, fig. 124.



Watched by two cloud-borne, celestial garland bearers, Ganesa dances rather incongruously on the back of his mount, the rat. The representation obviously is borrowed from images of his more famous father who dances similarly on the bull [99]. Even though the bull is disproportionately small compared with his master, the lithe Siva dancing on the bulky bull is not quite as humorous as his son's antics on the diminutive rat. Nevertheless despite his corpulence Ganesa is remarkably nimble. Although the rat seems unable to bear his master's weight, he looks up in admiration or perhaps astonishment at the divine dancer.

Two musicians are seated on either side on the base; one is a cymbalist and the other a drummer. Curiously the former is given rat ears and the latter elephant ears, clearly establishing their relationship with Ganesa and his mount. Otherwise the two are exactly like the celestials in the cloud above. Very likely they represent *gandharvas* (celestial musicians), who are often given animal faces, like the ganas of Siva, in later Indian art.

Ganesa is generally regarded as the god of auspicious beginnings and granter of fulfillment. In this particular form his role as a fertility deity is emphasized by the bunch of mangoes crowning the apex of the stele. His principal right hand exhibits the gesture of reassurance, and corresponding left arm is outstretched diagonally in a gesture from the dancer's repertoire. In his other hands he holds (on the right) a rosary, battle-ax, and one of his broken tusks; (on the left) a radish, bowl of sweets (from which he is eating), and snake.

An architectural design, indicating a shrine, is carved on the relief, while the base is enlivened by an elaborate lotus scroll. Deeply carved, Ganesa's rotund figure, especially his overhanging paunch, conveys a sense of volume and graceful buoyancy. A mid-twelfth-century date is suggested by a comparison with dated sculptures of the period (Huntington 1984, figs. 77, 80). Installed for decades on the outside walls of the collector's house, the once-polished surface unfortunately has suffered much damage. It otherwise remains one of the finest realizations of this theme from Bengal.



*106 A Bodhisattva*
Bengal; late twelfth century
Copper alloy; 2¾ in (7.0 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Michael Phillips
M.79.189.7



Except for the uncertainty of the attribute in the upper-right hand, this figure displays the iconographic features of the bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara as Shadakshari Lokesvara [98].

The deity sits in the lotus posture and holds his principal hands against his chest in the gesture of respect. In his upper-right hand he carries a rosary, and in his upper-left hand a lotus is clearly depicted. A broken circular object that may have been a rosary is still attached to the palm of the upper-right hand, but the identity or function of the pointed object above is unclear. If it is an attribute, it may represent a flame or thunderbolt prong, neither of which is prescribed for Shadakshari Lokesvara. It may have been placed behind the hand to balance the shape of the lotus on the other side. Whatever its identity, the figure probably represents Shadakshari Lokesvara, for in no other form does Avalokiteshvara display the gesture of respect with his two principal hands. This gesture is not exhibited by any Hindu god.

The image has apparently been well used since the hands and face show signs of having been rubbed with unguents.

*107 Siva's Family*
Orissa; ninth century (?)
Copper and silver alloy; 4⅞ in (12.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.75.4.8
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 76, no. 71; Glynn 1972, fig. 9.



As in most Uma-Mahesvara images [see 79] Siva and Parvati are seated with Ganesa and Kumara. Kumara is shown riding his peacock. A bull, lion, and kneeling female donor are on the base. The image must have been used as a household shrine for several generations as is evident by its highly effaced condition.

Rosenfield (1966) and Glynn (1972) (literature above) attributed the work to Rajim, Madhya Pradesh. A comparison with sculptures from Rajim has revealed little or no stylistic relationship. That the sculpture is from the eastern part of the country is clear from the fact that Siva is seen stroking Parvati's chin. Rarely is this expression of intimacy depicted in other regions of the country. While some details show similarities with Bihari sculptures, other features reveal a folk quality seldom encountered in Bihari bronzes. As Rosenfield stated, "Although the proportions as well as the modeling of the two principal figures are chaste and elegant, there is a certain archaic quality in the features, especially in the physiognomy, characterized by the broad and slightly open mouth, the eyes of the figure of Kārttikeya [Kumara], and the treatment of the *mayūra,* or peacock."

With the recent publication (D. Mitra 1978) of a hoard of bronzes from Achutrajpur, Orissa, some of these features seem less strange. Belonging to different periods, these bronzes show a curious blending of elements from Bihar (such as the design of the shrine and nimbus), archaic features of tribal bronzes, and local stylistic traits. Especially relevant are images of an Uma-Mahesvara, a goddess called Āmrā, and several Taras (D. Mitra 1978, figs. 21, 26–28, 86–87). The Uma-Mahesvara displays some of the archaic features of this bronze, while the lion in the representation of Āmrā is treated in the same crude and whimsical manner as the peacock

here. In proportion and modeling the two Tara figures are almost identical to the Parvati in the museum's image. An Orissan provenance for the bronze is also indicated by the hairstyles of Siva and Parvati, especially Siva's. In Bihar and Bengal Siva generally is given a tall, crownlike chignon, but the horizontal arrangement of the hair, like a rolled napkin in a ring seen here, is quite common in Orissan representations (Donaldson 1985–86, 1: figs. 18, 27, 46, 81, to cite a few examples).

All these examples belong to early temples in Orissa of about the seventh or eighth century. The two bronze Taras from Achutrajpur, which compare closely with the Parvati in this bronze, have been dated to the eighth century by D. Mitra. Thus a ninth-century date seems more suitable for this unusually interesting image than the eleventh-century date suggested in the literature above.



*108 The Goddess Lalita*
Orissa; tenth century
Copper alloy inlaid with silver; 5¾ in (14.6 cm)
Christian Humann Asian Art Fund
M.87.126



Standing on a lotus, the goddess holds in her right hand a lotus, which supports a Sivalinga, and in her left hand a mirror. On her right stands Ganesa whose emblems are a battle-ax and bowl of sweets. On her left Kumara holds his spear with his left hand. The object in his right hand is not recognizable.

The goddess can be identified as Lalita, who was especially popular in Bengal (see G. Bhattacharya 1986 for a detailed discussion of this image type). While in Bengali images she almost always is represented with four arms, here she is given only two. Another significant difference is that in Bengali images her animal mount usually is an iguana [see 32] or a lion or both; here no animal is added on the pedestal. Both boys, however, are shown with two arms as in Bengali images. Moreover both are adolescents and relate naturalistically to their mother in their proportions. Another noteworthy difference is that in Bengali images one of the mother's hands is usually placed on Kumara's head but not in this example. These variations reveal that the Orissan sculptors relied on a different iconographic tradition than that used by their Bengali counterparts.

All three figures are elegantly modeled, and the garments and ornaments are rendered exquisitely. While the children sway slightly as they stand, the rigidity of Parvati's stance is diminished by the stylish delineation of her long scarf and undulating ribbons of her diadem. Except for the Achutrajpur hoard, very little information is available about Orissan bronzes. The closest stylistic parallel for this finely crafted shrine is an eleventh-century metal image of Sadasiva (Auspicious Siva), formerly in the Pan-Asian collection (Pal 1977a, p. 100, no. 60). The greater simplicity of the museum's example suggests an earlier date for it. Curiously while Lalita and Kumara have become almost faceless due to the frequent application of unguents during worship, Ganesa seems to have received less attention.



*109 The God Ganesa*
Orissa; eleventh century
Copper alloy; 4⅝ in (11.8 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.87.97



Because of the constant application of unguents the surface of this bronze has become smooth, acquiring a rich tonality. It generally conforms to other representations of this popular Hindu deity. Although the objects held in the god's hands are quite effaced, very likely Ganesa holds in his upper-right hand a battle-ax. The object in his upper-left hand is probably a noose and that in his lower-left hand his broken tusk. Usually the right tusk is broken, but here the reverse is true. Moreover generally the god holds the bowl of sweets with his lower-left hand, and the trunk swings to the left as it digs into the delicacies. Here again the position is reversed. Such deviations probably reflect the sculptor's whimsy rather than an iconographic necessity. The snake is tied like a belt across his midriff.

Very few minor details point to Orissa as the possible provenance for this finely modeled Ganesa. The plain circular base is unusual. The only similarity with the two bronze Ganesas found among the Achutrajpur hoard is the placement of the rat in relief against the base. A peculiarity of this Ganesa is the manner in which the hair is arranged in three receding tiers and then held in place by a flat nimbus attached to the head at the back. In bronzes of eastern India, including those from Achutrajpur, the hair generally is piled into a tall matted crown. In an ivory Orissan Ganesa of about the fourteenth century the hair is arranged in a pyramid of five rows of curls (Lippe 1970, figs. 53–56). The hairdo here seems to be a flattened, two-dimensional version of that in the ivory image. Furthermore there too the god's lotus seat is supported by a plain, sloping circular base, and the design of the battle-ax is similar in both. Thus an Orissan provenance for this bronze seems fairly certain. The work is clearly earlier than the ivory Ganesa. D. Mitra (1978, figs. 24–25) has dated the more elaborate of the two Achutrajpur bronze Ganesas to the ninth–tenth centuries. By comparison this Ganesa is unlikely to be much later than the eleventh.



*110 The Goddess Tara*
Orissa (?); eleventh century
Brass; 4¾ in (12.1 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Pratapaditya Pal
M.86.280.1



While the identification and approximate date of this well-used bronze is not questioned, its exact provenance is less easy to determine. The goddess is the Buddhist Tara, and the work may be dated closer to the Bengali metal image of the goddess [104] than to the earlier, more impressive Bihari stone stele [73]. On one side of the lotus base is a diminutive, well-modeled kneeling figure of the lady who dedicated this image.

A comparison with the slightly earlier Orissan goddess [108] or several contemporary bronzes attributed to Bengal [95, 98] makes this a somewhat distinct work, nor are the Achutrajpur bronzes comparable. The proportions of both figures in this image are especially elongated compared with those of contemporary Bengali bronzes. The long face, canopylike coiffure, simple tiara with low crest are distinctive of Tara. Unusual is the treatment of the naturalistic garment folds, quite different from those seen in Bengali bronzes. The duplication of the form of each lotus petal on the base cannot be traced to any Bengali, Bihari, or central Indian example. At the same time, however, the sculpture shows a general kinship with Bengali bronzes, and therefore an attribution to Orissa near its border with Bengal is a strong probability. The back of the bronze is more finished than is usual with such figures.

111 *The Goddess Parvati*
Orissa; 1050–1100
Magnesian schist; 29 in (73.6 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart
M.77.82
Literature: Pal 1978a, p. 33, no. 19.

Against a shrine with columns and an arch of a design characteristic of Orissa, the tall and elegant goddess stands gracefully swaying on a lotus base. In her lower-right hand she holds a rosary and in her upper-right hand a cobra that doubles as a *nāgapāśa* (noose). The broken implement in her upper-left hand may have been an elephant goad, and she may originally have held a lotus in her second left hand. She is accompanied by two identical female attendants, each holding a cobra in the right hand and what may have been a flower in the left hand. Flanking her head is a pair of garland-bearing celestials, while above is a damaged face of glory.

The snarling lion carved on the front of the pedestal would suggest an identification with Durga or Parvati. An exact textual description for this image is yet to be found. Several other examples of this representation are still in situ in Orissan temples, usually placed in niches on the northern outside walls of the sanctum of Saiva temples (see Donaldson 1985–86, 1: figs. 981, 2: figs. 1816, 2019). Obviously the variation is peculiar to Orissa, where the image may constitute a synthesis between an important snake goddess and Parvati.

Although every detail of Parvati's garments, girdle, ornaments, and tall crown is meticulously rendered, the two attendants are more summarily carved except for their snakes. Especially noteworthy is the highly ornate design of the goddess's sari, scarf, and crown with circular projections and flying ribbons. A curious feature of this Parvati is the additional ornament decorating her left calf. This seems to have been peculiar to Orissan Parvati images (Donaldson 1985–86, 2: fig. 1816), and its exact significance is not known.

The closest stylistic parallel for this sculpture may be a now-damaged relief in the mid-eleventh-century temple in Prataprudrapur, near Kenduli, Orissa (Donaldson 1985–86, 1: 360, fig. 981). Although the figure of Parvati is broken, the two attendants, lion, and architectural design are extremely similar to this example.



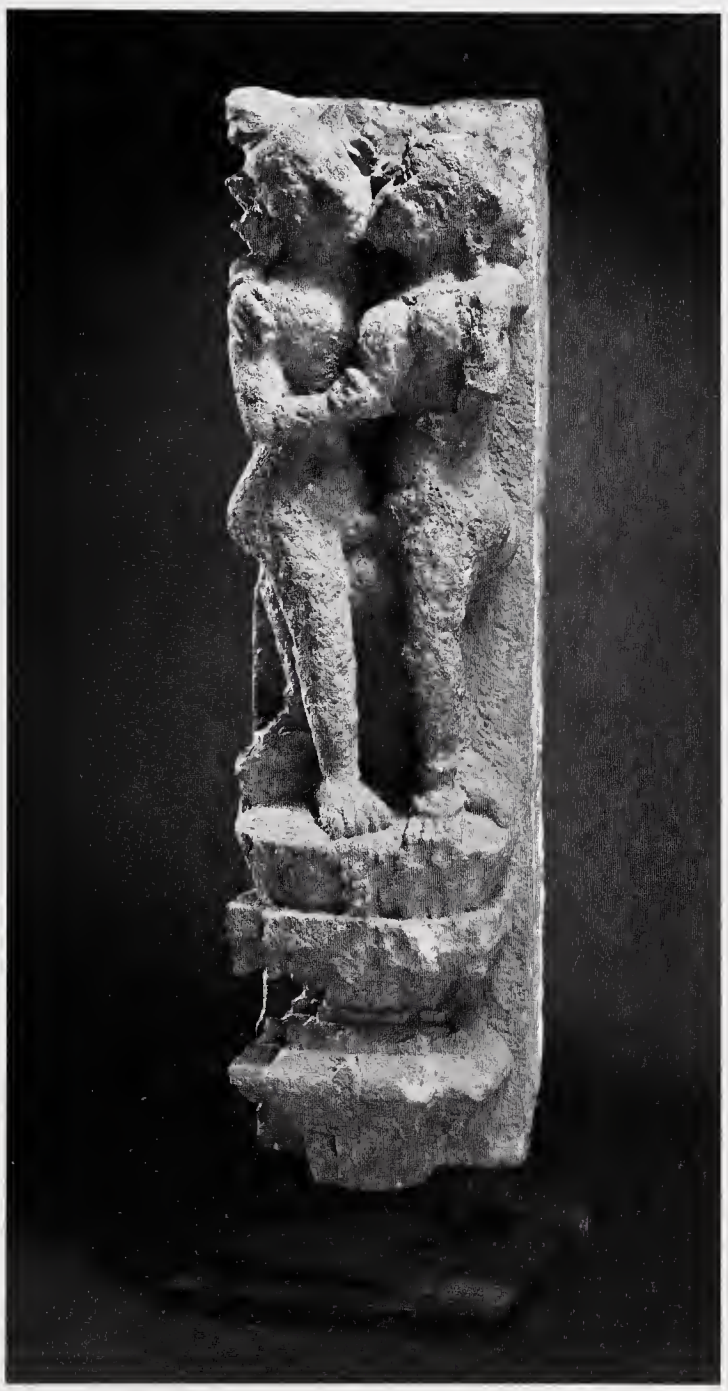
*112 A Celestial Nymph*
Orissa; twelfth century
Gneissic rock; 28 in (71.1 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart
M.76.48.2
Literature: Pal 1978, p. 40, no. 25.



Smiling radiantly, the female figure looks with indulgent amusement at the group of monkeys who are attempting to disrobe her. She makes no effort to dissuade them as she stops in her tracks to steady a pot on her head. One monkey seems more interested in the contents of the pot rather in her erogenous zone.

Representations of *surasundarī* (celestial nymphs) or *alasakanya* [see 43] comprised an important genre for Orissan sculptors. Such columnar reliefs, usually with a single female engaged in an astonishing variety of activities, although not always so droll, are a prominent decorative feature of the external walls of every Orissan temple. Not only do they reveal the Orissan sculptor's mastery of the female form but also his remarkable knowledge of the moods and activities of women. The figure's provocative posture has been borrowed from the dancer's repertoire, and the sculptor's adroit handling of the sinuous movement of her body is impressive. The introduction of the mischievous monkeys makes the theme both erotic and amusing.

*113 Celestial Lovers*
Orissa; thirteenth century
Gneissic rock; 19 in (48.3 cm)
Gift of Dr. Alston Callahan
M.77.150



More weathered than the celestial nymph [112], this sculpture once served the same architectural function on a temple wall. Like the single-woman motif, that of couples in union is an invariable part of the decorative scheme of an Orissan temple. Quite frequently the sculptures express acts of a more orgiastic nature.

Stylistically the sculpture is very likely later than the celestial nymph. As these reliefs were often placed on the walls in high recesses, they did not receive the same attention as the more easily apprehensible sculptures. Both figures are somewhat perfunctorily modeled with stiff, columnar legs and conspicuous rumps. Their stocky proportions and the design of the pedestal on which they stand are comparable with similar sculptures adorning temples of the thirteen–fourteenth centuries (see Donaldson 1985–86).

*114 A Celestial Musician*
Orissa; fourteenth century
Patinated ivory; 6¼ in (15.9 cm)
Christian Humann Asian Art Fund
M.86.201

This robustly modeled female was probably attached to a domestic shrine or piece of furniture, such as a throne. Although the figure appears to have been conceived in the round, the back is flat and has two small holes below the neck, which would have been fitted with pegs. A large quantity of furniture in Orissa that was constructed for royalty or divine effigies was either made of ivory or enriched with ivory figures. The way the left leg is bent back at the knee indicates that the figure may have been flying through the air or riding an animal. When complete the ivory figure would have been impressive. That she is a celestial musician is evident from the parts of a vina still attached to her left breast and hair.

A stylistically related ivory couple engaged in intercourse is preserved in the Madurai temple museum, Tamil Nadu. Presumably because it was part of the temple property, it has been published as an example of local craftsmanship (Huntington & Huntington 1985, p. 599, no. 24.13). The findspot of an object is, however, no sure indication of its place of manufacture. The Los Angeles museum has four throne legs, definitely of Orissan workmanship, which have female figures with identical proportions, physiognomy, modeling, and hairstyle (see Pal 1981a, p. 85, no. 80). The hairstyle and heart-shaped face with prominent nose and large, staring eyes make these figures distinctive. Compare also the shape and proportions of the body to a female in a slightly earlier stone sculpture [112].



*115 A Lotus-Bearing Goddess*
Orissa; fifteenth century
Brass; 7¾ in (19.7 cm)
Gift of Anna Bing Arnold
M.87.210

The lotus is a ubiquitous attribute in Indian iconography and is held by various goddesses. Isolated as the goddess is, her exact identification is difficult to determine. In a Buddhist context the goddess would represent Tara. If she were accompanied by Vishnu she would be Sri-Lakshmi; and if by Krishna, then Rukmini or Satyabhama.

That the figure is from Orissa seems certain, but its exact date is problematic. A comparison with the seventeenth-century Lakshmi [117] suggests that this lotus-bearing figure is older. The contours and modeling are much suaver and closer to the ivory celestial musician [114]. The proportions too are similar, but the shoulders are remarkably broad and the breasts fuller. The design of the tall crown is not generally encountered in goddess images from Orissa. The hair arranged in a bun at the back is more characteristic.

The closest stylistic parallel for this goddess is a stone image of the river goddess Yamuna in the Vishnu temple in Konarak (Donaldson 1985–86, 2: fig. 2861). In that thirteenth-century sculpture the goddess's hair is arranged in a crownlike chignon. Like this lotus-bearing goddess there too Yamuna strikes a slightly awkward pose. Thus a fifteenth-century date for this figure may be somewhat conservative.





*116 Dancing Krishna*
Orissa; c. 1500
Brass; 8⅝ in (21.9 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by Mrs. Burton M. Fletcher
M.87.124

The infant Krishna dances mischievously, probably expressing his ecstasy after having raided his foster-mother's larder. He holds in his right hand a ball of butter and in his left an upturned cup. Except for his ornaments, he is completely naked. Unusual is the placement of the right foot on a lotus stalk. This may express the boy's rambunctious nature, or it may have been a device to support the foot. Modeled completely in the round, the brass figure is solidly cast. The sculptor conceived the god as a plump, well-nourished infant, and although chubby, the child dances elegantly and gestures gracefully.

Images of the dancing Krishna do not occur in the early art of eastern India but were common in Tamil Nadu from about the twelfth century. A charming ivory child Krishna holding butterballs from the south [133] is not a dancing figure but represents the Tamil iconographic type, which may well have been introduced to Orissa from the south. When exactly this was done is not known, but it is unlikely to have been much earlier than the fifteenth century.



*117 The Lustration of Lakshmi*
Orissa; seventeenth century
Brass; 9¼ in (23.5 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes
M.74.40.1
Literature: Larson et al. 1980, p. 45, no. 8; Pal 1981b, p. 30, fig. 17.



The four-armed goddess of prosperity is being lustrated by four elephants of the directions [see 72]. Although from the front the forms of only two elephants can be discerned, the conjoint forms of a pair on each side can be recognized from the top. Forming an arch above the goddess's head, the animal trunks hold an upturned waterpot. Another curious feature of this late Orissan Gajalakshmi is the fact that the elephants are supported by the goddess herself as they stand on lotuses held in her upper hands. The lower-right hand exhibits the gesture of charity, the corresponding left hand forms the gesture of reassurance. Lakshmi is seated in the lotus posture with her knees extending far beyond the pericarp of her lotus seat.

The goddess is more buxom than earlier figures [111–12]. Characteristic of such late sculptures, the breasts are cuplike appendages that seem grafted to the body. The arms and hands have become enormously thick, and the face considerably broadened with diamond-shaped eyes, joined brows, and heavy nose and lips. The elephants are confidently rendered, and the carpets on their backs are quite realistic.

*Addendum* *Siva's Family on Mount Kailasa*
Orissa; fifteenth century or earlier
Gneissic rock; 12⅝ in (32.1 cm)
Purchased with Harry and Yvonne Lenart Funds and Museum Acquisition Fund
M.88.51

This spectacular relief was acquired as this catalogue was in final preparation for the press. Because of its extraordinary quality and uniqueness it was felt that it should be added to the catalogue even though the entry must be brief.

Although the relief depicts the familiar theme of Uma-Mahesvara, or Siva's family, it is more detailed and richly composed than standard representations of the subject. Not only has the sculptor given us a lively version of their habitat, Mount Kailasa, but Siva and Parvati are delineated as a loving couple completely absorbed in each other. Parvati gracefully offers Siva what looks like a *pan* (nuts and spices wrapped in a betel leaf) as he reclines elegantly using his bull as a bolster. Their sons Ganesa and Kumara have been tucked away on the sides of the relief. In contrast to the front with its luxuriant landscape of rock formations and foliage inhabited by birds and animals of many kinds, the back is plain but well finished. The exact function of the piece is not known, but it could have served as a finial for an inscribed slab. Pending further research, the date suggested here is tentative.

Whatever its date and function, the stele must be regarded as a remarkably attractive and dramatic example of Indian relief sculpture. The shallow carving makes the relief almost painterly in its two-dimensional effect, and very likely the sculptor did use a painting as a model. The carving is also reminiscent of the finest Orissan ivory carvings of this period.



# Southern India



# Introduction

The south Indian sculptures in the collection reflect a great variety.[1] Most are of stone or metal as in the north, but the collection also includes ivory and wood sculptures. Although throughout southern India stone served as the principal building material from the seventh to nineteenth centuries, in Kerala wood was widely used until recent times. Elephants being plentiful in the south, especially in Karnataka and Kerala, ivory was always a popular medium for artistic expression. It was used extensively in Goa, and the collection includes several Christian images carved in ivory.

As in the north sculptures served broadly religious functions. There are noteworthy differences however. Generally throughout the subcontinent stone sculptures adorned temples, but bronze sculptures served different purposes in the south and north. Some south Indian bronzes clearly were meant for domestic shrines, but the larger examples were dedicated to temples for festival processions. Unlike bronzes made in the north, these processional images from the south are invariably modeled in the round so that they can be seen from all sides. This practice seems to have been introduced by the sculptors of the early Chola period. Most such figures are kept in subsidiary halls in temples, often fully clothed and placed against walls. The viewer rarely can see their forms even from the front. Northern sculptors preferred not to model or finish the backs of metal images as did their Chola counterparts. Viewed on pedestals and without their additional apparel, the Chola bronzes seem akin to freestanding European sculptures.

Another significant difference between the north and south is the paucity of Buddhist sculptures. Before the eighth century Buddhism and Jainism flourished all over the south. Thereafter, however, Hinduism, especially Saivism, not only was on the ascendance but was ultimately successful in obliterating Buddhism altogether, except for a few pockets such as the coastal city of Nagapattinam, Tamil Nadu. Saiva and Vaishnava poet-saints, who flourished between the eighth and twelfth centuries, are said to have been largely responsible for the disappearance of Buddhism and consolidation of Hinduism. The celebrated philosopher Śaṁkarāchārya (active eighth century or earlier) is regarded by Hindus as the destroyer of Buddhism in India, but very likely this attribution is apocryphal. Nevertheless by the eleventh century, with the exception of Nagapattinam, Buddhism no longer influenced the religious life of the south. The museum's collection includes two Buddha images from Nagapattinam [140a–b], where

Buddhism continued to survive largely because of its direct connection with Buddhists from Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Although the two sculptures, one in stone and the other in metal, are not especially distinguished, they represent the type of Buddha images popular in Nagapattinam.

The few Jain sculptures from the south [125–27] are from Karnataka and of excellent quality. The bronze Jina [125] is not only an outstanding south Indian Jain sculpture but one of the major sculptures in the collection. The history of the faith in the south too reflects the hostility of Hinduism, but as elsewhere on the subcontinent Jain communities appear to have been more resilient and continue to be a presence, especially in Karnataka.

While the two "heterodox" religions of north Indian origin have been less fortunate in the south, two imported faiths—Islam and Christianity—curiously have not only survived but have flourished. There are large communities of Christians in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Goa. There are no Islamic sculptures in the collection, but there are several Christian images from the seventeenth–eighteenth centuries, including a wood pietà from Kerala and several ivories from Goa. Although carved by local artisans, these works echo European styles in an archaic manner. While some local motifs are perceptible in a few ivories [120–22], generally the artists did not Indianize the figures depicted.

Most south Indian sculptures in the collection are from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. The Kerala group is not extensive, but includes some fine wood carvings, for which Kerala sculptors are deservedly admired. Like all other societies in the south they were overwhelmed by the genius of their Tamil neighbors. Nevertheless Kerala supported a flourishing bronze tradition. The history of bronzes in southern India, other than the Tamil tradition, has been neglected. No attempt has yet been made to establish a chronology for Kerala bronzes, and only a few can be dated before the thirteenth century. A small bronze Vishnu [127] may be one such early example or it may be a Tamil Nadu bronze from the ninth–tenth centuries reflecting vestiges of the Pallava tradition.

Post-thirteenth-century bronzes from Kerala are more easily distinguished from contemporary Tamil Nadu sculptures. They reveal not only a different ethnic type with distinct proportions and physiognomies but generally a greater penchant for ornamental exuberance. This may indicate an influence from the highly florid style developed in the neighboring Mysore region of Karnataka, although the Kerala bronzes are not quite as ornate.

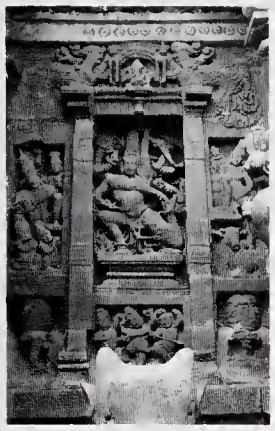
No sculpture in the collection is known to be from present-day Andhra with certainty. One possibility is a charming bronze Ambika [126], which relates to tenth-century sculptures produced in Andhra Pradesh. A Surya stele [131], said to be from Karnataka, displays stylistic affinities with temple sculptures in western Andhra, contiguous with Karnataka. These inland regions of today's Andhra Pradesh were parts of the Later Chalukya Kingdom. Similarly a small, but rare bronze representation of the supine Vishnu [132] may belong either to Karnataka or Andhra. By and large the art of Andhra during the Chola period is less exciting than earlier Buddhist art produced in the Krishna River Valley and Guntur District.



Pallava shrines, Mamallapuram, Tamil Nadu, seventh century. Photograph by the author.

From about 750 until about 975 the dominant power in the Deccan were the Rashtrakutas, who continuously vied with the Pratiharas in the north and Palas in the east for pan-Indian political hegemony. In the south their major rivals were the Pallavas, who dominated much of Tamil Nadu from about the latter half of the sixth century until the Cholas came to power in the mid-ninth century. Among

the powerful contemporaries of the Pallavas in southern Tamil Nadu were the ancient Pandyas, who ruled from the second to the fourteenth centuries, but politically and artistically they were overshadowed first by the Pallavas and then by the Cholas.



Dancing Siva, Kailasanath temple, Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu, eighth century. Photograph by the author.

Very few sculptures in the collection belong to the Rashtrakuta-Pallava phase of south Indian history. No eighth-century sculpture is included in the collection, but the ninth century is represented by at least three and possibly four examples. Of these the stele depicting a family of snake deities [124] is a recent addition, and if it is from northern Karnataka it may be the only example of Rashtrakuta-period art in the collection. The most outstanding ninth-century sculpture in the collection is the bronze Jina [125], the exact provenance of which remains uncertain. It has been considered to be a Karnataka sculpture but shows affinities with the early Chola art of Tamil Nadu. Whatever its exact provenance its ninth-century date seems unquestionable. The third sculpture of this early phase is a stone tympanum that is of interest for its unusual subject matter and charming simplicity [135]. Representing a rarely depicted Saiva myth of Tamil Nadu, it may well be a sculpture from the Pandya territories. Its style corresponds closely to the ninth-century rock-cut Pandya temple in Kalugumalai and to Pallava reliefs. The lions are clearly derived from Pallava monuments, whereas the tenderly naturalistic rendering of the cow is reminiscent of the extraordinarily lively and masterly delineation of animals in the rock-cut reliefs of Mamallapuram. Finally a small bronze Vishnu of about the ninth–tenth centuries [137], created in Tamil Nadu or Kerala, vestigially continues the Pallava tradition in style and iconography. The study of Pallava bronzes and art of the Pandya kingdom is still in its infancy.

The post-ninth-century stone sculptures from Karnataka were created either during the reign of the Later Chalukyas or the Hoysalas, who carved out a kingdom in southern Karnataka after the fall of the Chalukyas. Rising to power in the early twelfth century, the Hoysalas ruled over a large kingdom until almost the mid-fourteenth century. The polished green stone celestial cymbalist [128] is a significant example of the Later Chalukyan period of Karnataka sculpture. Apart from being a representative bracket figure, it reveals the jeweler's penchant for intricate detail carving, the hallmark of the style, continued with even richer abandon by the Hoysala sculptors, although not always with equal finesse [127]. The art of the Later Chalukya period is also represented by two finely crafted bronzes [126, 129]. Karnataka bronzes too are rather rare and have received little scholarly attention.



Wall section of Hoysalesvara temple, Halebid, Karnataka, 1152–73. Photograph by the author.

Both the nobility and affluent citizenry of the Hoysala Kingdom were generous patrons of the arts, and many of their temples remain among the most luxuriant ornate stone structures on the subcontinent. Of the two Hoysala sculptures in the collection, the Kubera [127] shows a more restrained penchant for the florid ornamentation characteristic of the earlier Chalukyan style. By comparison the Durga [130], with its rich ornamentation, crowded composition, and deep carving almost like openwork, is more typical of Hoysala sculpture. Just as the Hoysala temples are among the most complex in the history of Indian architecture, so also their ornamentation is the most baroque of all Indian sculptural styles. It is as if, confronted with the more restrained elegance of the earlier Chalukya or contemporary Chola styles of Tamil Nadu, the Hoysala artists were determined to display their originality with sheer technical virtuosity. This decorative exuberance seems to have been adopted later by artists of Kerala, while a

less effusive style was favored by descendants of the Hoysala sculptors as is evident from the exquisitely elegant ivory Krishna [133] or delightful bronze dancing Ganesa [134]. In neither is the form allowed to be obscured by a plethora of garments and luxuriant jewelries as in the much earlier Hoysala Durga [130].

Rising to power in the mid-ninth century in the Tanjore District, Tamil Nadu, the Cholas built the greatest empire in the history of the south and dominated the region for more than three centuries. At the height of its power, around the turn of the first millennium, the Chola Empire not only included much of the peninsula, but their military and political influence extended to the island of Sri Lanka, Malaysian archipelago, and Indonesian islands across from the Bay of Bengal. Rajendra Chola I led expeditions into northern India, making forays as far east as Bengal and claimed the fanciful title *Gangāikoṇḍa,* Conqueror of the Ganges. The period of Chola dominance in the south is remembered less for its military conquests and imperial adventures than for its remarkable florescence of Tamil culture. The temple architectural style, known as Dravida, reached its apogee during the Chola period, which also witnessed an astonishingly innovative and prolific phase of bronze casting.



Wall section with Siva as the Naked Beggar, Koranganatha temple, Srinivasanallur, Tamil Nadu, ninth century. Photograph courtesy the American Institute of Indian Studies, Ramnagar, Varanasi.

The early Pallavas and Pandyas appear to have been more interested in rock-cut temples than in structural buildings. Borrowing ideas from their forebears, Chola architects perfected the Dravida style, while the sculptors reached new heights of artistic achievement that remained the standard for centuries after the demise of the empire. The artistic norms established by Chola sculptors hardly altered during the more than two centuries of rule by the Vijaynagar dynasty (c. 1336–1565) and their successors, the Nayakas.

The museum's group of stone and bronze sculptures from Tamil Nadu is impressive for its quality and thematic variety. Although the figures represented in Chola sculptures are idealized, they appear to be naturalistically modeled, especially the bronzes depicted in the round. Limbs and joints are better articulated than in north Indian figures, and the back and buttocks are more naturalistically shaped. Even though the figures are given substantial ornaments, Chola sculptors retained an ideal balance between form and ornamentation. Characterized by suave elegance, the figures display a restrained sensuousness and rarely strike exaggerated poses. Their slender, smoothly proportioned bodies with rather broad shoulders are supported by well-shaped legs.

Unlike their northern counterparts, Tamil Nadu sculptors primarily worked in granite, a difficult material with which to articulate details. Furthermore details are often worn away by weathering, especially in monuments built near the coast. Stone sculptures in the region, used generally in subsidiary shrines, are often freed from their backgrounds, but the backs are left unfinished. Unlike northern sculptures, bronzes created in Tamil Nadu, except those for Buddhist use, rarely were gilded. Moreover, because they were often buried for long periods, some, such as the spectacular Rajamannar group [147], are beautifully patinated in a rich green malachite or blue azurite.

The most distinguished and best-known thematic invention of Chola sculptors was the bronze image of Siva as Nataraja [138a]. The museum's collection also has a stone example [138b], but the bronze expresses more fully the aesthetic qualities for which this particular sculptural form is so universally admired. Characteristic of early Chola sculpture, the figure is elegantly slim, with narrow hips, broad shoulders, and elongated face. By the mid-eleventh century Chola artists preferred heavier forms and broader faces. Whereas tenth-century sculptures

have a lightness and buoyancy, later sculptures are more weighty. This becomes clear by comparing the tenth-century bronze Nataraja and its twelfth-century descendant. Few iconographic or stylistic changes were introduced by later Chola sculptors or their Vijaynagar descendants. The Krishna and Vishnu groups [147, 153], for instance, echo the same formal characteristics of early Chola figures, except that the modeling is not as smooth and graceful. The postures have become increasingly mannered, and the noses more prominent. Although the figures are still elegant, they have been drained of their vitality.

The Vijaynagar Empire was a formidable power in the south while it lasted, and although it encompassed much of the southern peninsula and remained a bastion against advancing Muslims for two centuries, its seat of authority was in Karnataka. Thus, while Chola art is a direct offshoot of Tamil culture, the term *Vijaynagar period* denotes a political period rather than a stylistic attribution.

During the Vijaynagar period artists in Karnataka continued to produce works in the earlier Chalukya-Hoysala tradition, while the Chola style remained predominant in Tamil Nadu. Vijaynagar patrons were decidedly partial to the architectural and sculptural styles prevalent in Tamil Nadu, which therefore continued to dominate the temples built during the period in Karnataka as well. This explains why such later sculptures as the ivory Krishna [133] or dancing Ganesa [134], although rendered in Karnataka, reflect the greater simplicity preferred by Tamil sculptors. Vijaynagar-period sculpture is yet to be thoroughly studied, but it is readily apparent that in Tamil Nadu the norms established by the Chola forebears generally remained valid. There was a distinct tendency to build more elaborate and grandiose temple complexes, and increasingly the gateway known as a gopuram became more monumental than the sanctum itself. This may have been done deliberately to save both the sanctum and wealth of the temple from invading Muslims. In keeping with the increasing size and complexity of the temple, its sculptural program became more elaborate and the sculptures too began to grow physically. Awesome as these gateways and colossal sculptures are for their sheer physical presence, aesthetically they are far less appealing than the temples and sculptures produced when the Chola Empire was at its apogee during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

Notes

1. There is no comprehensive survey of south Indian sculptures (see Huntington & Huntington 1985; Harle 1986; Lippe 1978).

*118 The God Hanuman*
Maharashtra; sixteenth century
Copper alloy; 9 1/16 in (23.0 cm)
Gift of Anna Bing Arnold
M.87.160.1

This highly decorative bronze depicts the monkey god Hanuman [see 37, 161] striding along the inner rim of the aureole. With his tail strung with a bell and curling over his head and his right arm outstretched, he seems to be balancing like an acrobat.

He holds in his left hand the magical *viśalya-karaṇī*. In the epic *Ramayana,* when Lakshmaṇa, Rama's brother, seriously was taken ill, Hanuman, Rama's devout follower, raced to the Himalayas to secure this lifesaving plant and revive the comatose prince. In north Indian sculptures Hanuman is often portrayed supporting the entire mountain. The narrative intent is made clear here by the inclusion of a fallen demon below the divine simian.

A popular iconographic type in Maharashtra, this bronze is finely crafted with a lively design. The wide mandorla is enriched with rows of swaying leaves, daisylike flowers, and along the outer edge ribbed balls, perhaps representing fruit. The row of flowers is interrupted on either side of Hanuman's arched tail with symbols of the crescent moon and sun, thereby implying that he is flying across the heavens. The monkey god is indeed a spirited figure, animated further by lovely, stylized plants, attached to his body not unlike the flower he holds in his hands. But for his simian tail and head, he has a sturdy human body. The mandorla apex is crowned with a rearing multihooded serpent, which forms a canopy flanked by two geese with long tails almost like a peacock's.

This particular type of Hanuman image seems to have been an invention of the sculptors of Maharashtra and is represented only in metal.



*119a–b Sivalinga*
Maharashtra; seventeenth century

*a,* brass; 6⅞ in (17.4 cm)
Gift of Myrna Smoot and Peter Smoot
M.84.228.4

*b,* brass; 7¼ in (18.1 cm)
Indian Art Special Purposes Fund
M.77.6.1a–b

These Sivalingas are quite typical of Maharashtra, but when exactly the type came into use is not known. Unlike the more conventional lingas, where the head projects from the side of the shaft [30], in these examples the entire column is conceived as a head in the round. Moreover Siva appears as a moustachioed, turbaned chief rather than as an ascetic.

The modeling of the facial features is very similar in both. The eyes are remarkably large, nose broadly flaring, moustache prominently twirled, and mouth wide and grinning with thick, doughy lips. In the more complete example [*b*] the Sivalinga is inserted into a cylindrical socket on a stepped base with lotus petals incised in the middle. A small shelf in the front supports a seated bull facing his master. A wide cobra hood forms a canopy above. The shape of the ears and designs of the ornaments are different in the two examples.



119a



119a back

119b



*120 Christ the Good Shepherd*
Goa; seventeenth century
Patinated ivory; 7⅝ in (19.5 cm)
Christian Humann Asian Art Fund
M.86.187

The theme of Christ the Good Shepherd seems to have been particularly favored among the Christians of Goa. While the exact date of these carvings is not known, most published examples are attributed to the seventeenth century or possibly earlier (see Collin 1984).

This incomplete example was made in at least two parts and originally would have had a superstructure with flowering branches and the figures of God the Father and the dove symbolizing the Holy Ghost. What remains of this elaborately carved ivory shows a Christ figure seated with ankles crossed atop a tall plinth carved as a mountain with grottoes, rocks, and foliage. Dressed in a wool tunic, the Good Shepherd holds a lamb with his left hand. His right hand supports his head, and his elbow rests on a gourd. His eyes are shut as if he were asleep.

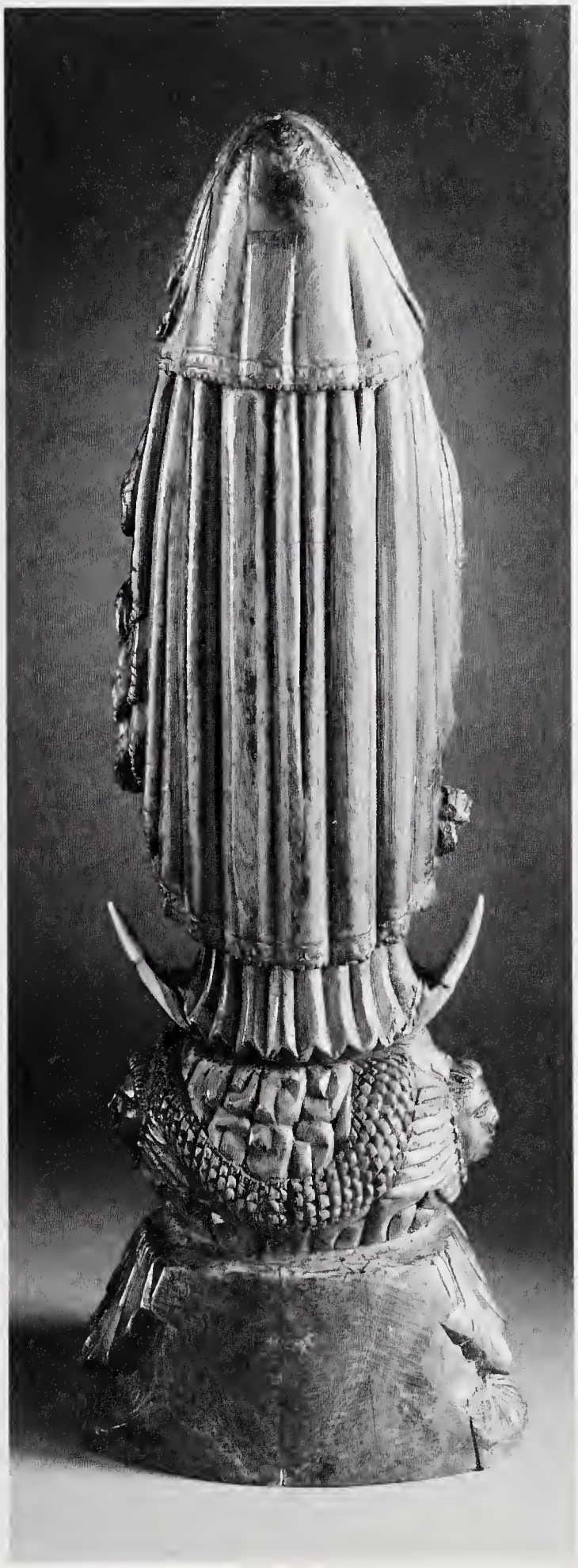
At the bottom of the plinth is the recumbent figure of Saint Catherine of Alexandria (died c. 307) reading a book. She is flanked on either side by two lions. The next tier is occupied by a curled-up sheep, flanked by a pair of sheep, below a tree, presumably the tree of life. On the next level two pelicans (that on the right is broken) are drinking from a font; a jet of water would have flowed from the mouth of a lion, one of whose eyes still remains at the apex of the plinth.

These are familiar symbols of Christian iconography. Said to feed its young with its own blood, the pelican symbolizes the eucharist as well as the self-sacrifice of Christ. According to Collin, Saint Catherine is the patron saint of Goa. She is reputed to have miraculously helped the Portuguese during their conquest of Goa in 1510. The representation of Christ as a contemplative figure is unusual. This particular image, as suggested by Collin, may have been borrowed by the Jesuit missionaries from Buddhist images of Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara and Buddha Maitreya. Influences may also have been exerted by the popular Indian concepts of Krishna as the child god and divine cowherd. The Portuguese Christians thus could have deliberately selected a theme familiar to the Indians.



*121 The Immaculate Conception*
Goa; eighteenth century
Ivory; 8 in (20.3 cm)
Gift of Paul F. Walter
M.87.227.1a–b





This image of the Virgin symbolizes her Immaculate Conception and identification with the Apocalyptic Woman. The Immaculate Conception is signified by the serpent below her feet. The term *Immaculate Conception* refers to the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother. In order to conceive Christ Mary herself had to be untainted by Original Sin. This concept was further developed in the sixteenth century, when she came to be known as "the Second Eve," and for this reason the serpent is included in such representations.

The image was further elaborated in seventeenth-century Spain by the Spanish painter, writer, and art-censor to the Inquisition, Francisco Pacheco (1564–1654) in his *Arte de la Pintura* (1649). Already in the thirteenth century the Virgin had been identified with the Apocalypic Woman, who is described in Revelation (12: 1–5):

*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars: And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered. And there appeared another wonder in heaven; and behold a great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. . . . And the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*

Pacheco simplified the theme by prescribing that "she be represented as a young woman of twelve or thirteen years, dressed in a white robe and blue cloak, her hands folded on her breast or meeting in prayer; the moon to be a crescent (the antique symbol of chastity), horns downward; round her waist the Franciscan girdle with its three knots" (Hall 1979, pp. 326–27).

In most essentials this figure follows these descriptions. In paintings the serpent, two angels, and crescent are usually placed on a globe. Here, however, the globe is shaped more elliptically and is given a rocky surface as if the female figure is standing on mountains. Furthermore there are three heads of angels emerging from the surface, while the serpent's head is prominently elongated and unnaturalistically shaped. The interpretation of the globe as a mountain may reflect an attempt at Indianization in which universal manifestations of divinities are often placed on top of the cosmic mountain. The base with acanthus instead of lotus leaves may also reflect Indian influences. Otherwise the figure conforms to a Spanish model. Especially noteworthy is the elegant treatment of the volumes of the robe, which contributes significantly to the animation of the figure.

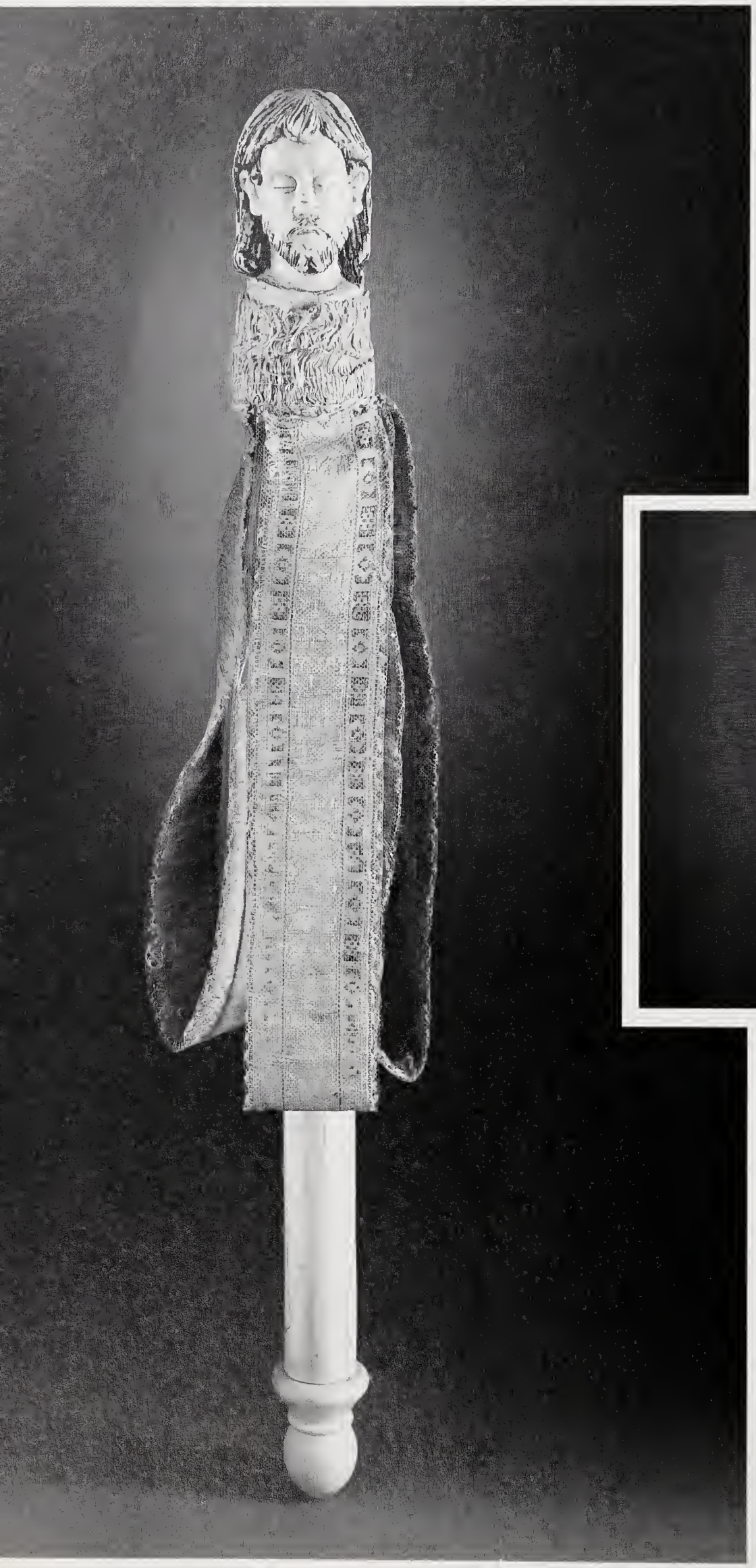
*122 The Madonna and Child Enthroned*
Goa; c. 1700
Ivory; 4⅞ in (12.4 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Pratapaditya Pal
M.87.224
Literature: Larson et al. 1980, p. 120, no. 26.

While the theme of an enthroned Madonna and Child is common in Christian iconography, this particular depiction presents some unusual variations. The Virgin is neither crowned nor veiled. Her right fist is clenched and rests on her thigh. Instead of being seated on her lap, as is traditional in this composition, called Sedes Sapientiae (Throne of wisdom), the nude infant stands on his mother's left knee. His right hand is broken; the object in his left hand may have been an orb, an insignia of majesty. Usually in Sedes Sapientiae images, Christ is clothed. The enthroned Madonna with the nude, standing Christ is not, however, unknown in European art.

The omission of the Virgin's veil may have been accidental. A characteristically Indian detail is the semicircular projection at the top of the throne. Carved as a lotus, it imitates the lotus-halo often seen behind the heads of Indian deities.

Despite the problems in identifying this as a Sedes Sapientiae, the image conveys a sense of majesty by the Virgin's dignified aloofness and the composition's powerful symmetry, emphasized even in the way the ends of the Virgin's robes are folded over her knees.







*123 A Standard with the Head of Christ*
Goa; eighteenth century
Ivory with color; silk and linen tassels
17¼ in (43.8 cm)
Gift of Paul F. Walter; M.87.227.2a–b

The smooth staff or festooned standard is surmounted with the head of Christ. The head and staff were carved separately and joined. Such standards as well as crucifixes are often used by Christians in religious processions.

The expressive face of Christ is strikingly framed by his black hair. Noteworthy are the almost clothlike folds of hair in the center of the forehead and half-shut eyes, also painted black. The half-shut eyes may be due to influences of the Buddha image.

# Karnataka



*124 Serpent Deities*
Karnataka; ninth century
Sandstone; 28¼ in (71.8 cm)
Ancient Art Council Fund
M.87.17

As in many ancient cultures the veneration of serpents is still common in India. Reliefs such as this can be seen throughout the country and from each period of history. It is often difficult to be exact about either the provenance or date of such specimens, but this particular example is said to be from Karnataka. Similar reliefs can be seen in situ all over the state, where the cult is particularly popular.

While serpents were worshiped for protection from their deadly bite, they were also implored for prosperity and progeny. In India serpents traditionally are closely associated with gems. That this particular image, probably set up under a tree in a village shrine, was a fertility symbol, is evident not only by the pairing of the two larger serpents but also by the presence of several baby reptiles slithering along the stele's surface. The species represented is the Indian cobra, and its divine nature is indicated by the multiple hoods of the parents. Although the reptiles are not rendered with naturalistic details, the sculptor has admirably succeeded in giving a convincing portrayal of their mating ritual. They seem quite absorbed in one another as their children swim around them like fish in a pool. The disarming simplicity of the relief is perhaps what makes it so expressive a representation of reptilian intimacy. (For a more elaborate twelfth-century relief from southern Karnataka see Settar 1975, pl. III.)



*125 A Meditating Jina*
Karnataka or Tamil Nadu; 850–900
Copper alloy; 8⅞ in (22.6 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.82.6.2
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, pp. 92–93, no. 102; Pal 1975b, p. 551, pl. 328a; Heeramaneck 1979, fig. 99a–b.



Writing about portrayals of Jinas, Zimmer said, "The image of the released one seems neither animate nor inanimate but pervaded by a strange and timeless calm" (Zimmer [1951] 1974). Few images of Jinas express this "timeless calm" as well as this sculpture. As the unknown Jina sits in the classic Indian posture of an ideal yogi, he is a perfect realization of physical equipoise and mental harmony. As prescribed for Jina images, he has broad shoulders like that of a *vṛisha-skandha* (bull), his elegantly shaped torso is as slim and taut as that of a lion, and if he were standing his arms would reach his knees.

Presenting a noble profile, the dignified figure is modeled fully in the round. The master sculptor has expressed the plasticity of the flesh and muscles with utmost economy and subtle surface modulations. No fussy garments distract the viewer's perception of the human body as pure form, without sacrificing its identity or sensual warmth.

The closest stylistic parallels for this outstanding example are a bronze in the Prince of Wales Museum, Bombay, representing Bahubali, son of Jina Ṛishabhanātha (Ghosh 1975, 3: pl. 352) and a seated Jina in the Kansas City Museum (Pal 1975b, pl. 328a). While the proportions and modeling are similar in both, the shapes of the heads and facial features differ. Because the Bahubali is said to have been found at Sravanabelgola, a famous Jain pilgrimage near Mysore, it has been generally attributed to that region of Karnataka. The modeling and proportions of the Bahubali and the museum's figure, however, relate them also to rock-cut Jain sculptures in Kalugumalai, Tamil Nadu, while almost identical faces may be seen in the exquisitely carved figures in the Nagesvar temple of about 886 in Kumbhakonam, Tamil Nadu (Kramrisch 1954, figs. 95, 112; Lippe 1978, pl. 229). Thus a date in the second half of the ninth century seems more certain than the provenance of this extraordinary bronze.



*126 The Goddess Ambika*
Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh; tenth century
Copper alloy; 9¾ in (24.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.12
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 92, no. 101; Pal 1974a, pp. 26, 50, no. 26.

Known generally as yakshis, Jain goddesses play a subservient role to Jinas as in this shrine where the Jina Neminatha is seated above the goddess.

With her hair elegantly arranged, the goddess stands gracefully below a canopy of mango leaves and bunches of fruit. In her right hand she holds mangoes and rests her left hand on the head of a male child, who stretches out his right arm toward her. Known as Ambika, a Jain counterpart of the Hindu Parvati, she is one of the few yakshis that is the focus of a cult among the Jains. Her male companion, Gomedha, is the plump, diminutive figure riding a lion at her side.

This handsome bronze was once attributed to the Deccan and dated to the tenth–eleventh centuries. It was described as "a work of genial charm and refinement . . . [resembling] a tenth-century bronze figure of the Goddess Vidyadevī from Mysore" (Rosenfield 1966), now in the British Museum (Ghosh 1975, pl. 319a).

Although these bronzes may not actually be from Mysore, they reflect a style prevalent in a large area of the Deccan, including parts of Karnataka, that was once under the control of the Later Chalukyas of Kalyani. The very distinctive coiffure of Ambika is found in sculptures from Alampur and Hemavati, Andhra Pradesh (see Khan 1973, figs. 10, 18, 43; Sivaramamurti 1964, pls. I–II, XXXI). While Alampur formed an integral part of the Later Chalukya Kingdom, Hemavati was the capital of the Nolamba dynasty from about 850 until about 975.

The distinctive torana of two slender pillars supporting multilooped arches seems to have been characteristic of Later Chalukyan art. By the eleventh century the motif had become extremely elaborate. The greater simplicity of this torana and elegant modeling of Ambika, comparable with ninth-century Nolamba sculptures, suggest a tenth-century date for this bronze. It is very likely a Later Chalukyan bronze, but whether it was created in Karnataka or the western districts of Andhra Pradesh is not known.





*127 The God Kubera*
Karnataka, Varuna; c. 1050
Magnesian schist; 36 in (91.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.69.13.8
Literature: Pal 1976, p. 54, fig. 25; Newman 1984, p. 28, fig. 20; del Bonta 1987, p. 274, fig. 1.

This sculpture is from a small town called Varuna, about seven miles east of Mysore (see del Bonta 1987). It probably belonged to a Jain shrine because four stylistically related Jain sculptures remain at the site.

The portly figure represents Kubera, who is venerated by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains alike as a god of wealth. In the Jain pantheon Kubera is referred to as a yaksha who attends the Jina Mallinātha. Obesity and the lemon are his distinctive attributes, and this figure holds a lemon in his left hand. The stalk of a lotus blossom may have been held in his right hand.

Del Bonta suggests an early eleventh-century date for the entire group of Jain sculptures in Varuna. That this work is older than the twelfth-century Hoysala sculptures seems clear because of its simpler ornamentation. It lacks the elaborate foliated arch, a distinctive trait of Hoysala stelae. An aureole instead comprises a border of flatly rendered geometrical designs and floral motifs similar to those seen in the Sirpur altarpiece [39]. An attenuated variation of this design is used on arches above the deities in two stelae from Hariharapura, Karnataka, while incised aureoles with different designs may be seen in a frieze depicting the Mother Goddesses from Halebid (Settar 1975, pls. XXXIII–XXXIV, XXXVI). All three sculptures, now in the National Museum, Copenhagen, are dated to the early twelfth century. Thus a date around 1050 may be more precise than the early eleventh-century date suggested by del Bonta.

*128 A Celestial Cymbalist* *Color plate, p. 38*
Karnataka, Dharawar District; c. 1100
Schist (metasiltstone); 45 in (14.3 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.70.1.2
Literature: Pal 1976, pp. 23–25, figs. 23–24; Heeramaneck 1979, no. 106; Newman 1984, p. 26.

Carved almost completely in the round, even though she was meant to be seen only from the front, the richly adorned lady strikes a provocative dancing pose as she holds a pair of cymbals. An aureole forms an arch above her head so that she appears to be dancing beneath a bower. The arch is embellished with a thick meandering vine enclosing lotuslike blossoms from which hang bunches of mangoes. Thus apart from representing a celestial dancer, she also symbolizes fruitfulness [see 126]. If the lady is wearing a garment, it is hardly visible. Her form is skillfully laced with richly carved jewelry, which alluringly obscures her physical charms.

The sculpture once served as a bracket figure. Similar bracket figures may be seen in Later Chalukyan temples of the eleventh to twelfth centuries at such sites in Karnataka as Gadag, Ittagi, and Lukkundi. Particularly similar are examples collected from the Dharwar District, now in the Prince of Wales Museum (M. Chandra 1974, figs. 132–33, 137–44). One is a dated relief of 1070 with deeply cut figures of similar features, proportions, and such details as vines enclosing lotuses.

This celestial cymbalist is one of the finest sculptures in the collection. While details are exquisitely rendered in several other schools of sculpture, the ornaments in this example are not only executed with extraordinary finesse, but where they are detached from the form they have a volume of their own. It seems as if they were carved separately with great delicacy and then attached to the figure. The figure's attractiveness is also enhanced by the highly polished smooth surfaces that gleam like a polished bronze rather than a stone sculpture. Despite the sharp bends of the body and abstract shapes of the limbs, the figure expresses the natural grace and movement of a nimble dancer.



*129 Siva's Family*
Karnataka; c. 1100
Copper alloy; 8¼ in (21.0 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.11
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 92, no. 100; Trabold 1975, p. 25, no. 27.

Although a certain intimacy is expressed between Siva and Parvati, who each rest one hand on the other's back, this is a more hieratic and formal representation than those encountered in north-central India [see 34, 51].

The bull sits sideways in front of his master, and like two sentinels Kumara and Ganesa ride their mounts on either side of the central figures. Siva holds in his two upper hands the trident and snake. The two unusual iconographic features of this group are the animal below Parvati's left foot and nine seated figures who form an arch above Siva's head. Although the animal looks like a miniature dinosaur, it is in fact meant to be an iguana, the goddess's mount in her Gauri manifestation [32]. Usually in Uma-Mahesvara images her mount is the lion, but the iguana is also seen in other examples of Deccani sculpture (Settar 1975, pls. XXII–XXIII). Despite their abraded condition, the nine figures appear to be identical. All are male and seated in the posture of meditation. It is tempting to identify them as



the nine planetary deities, even though Rahu (Eclipse) and Ketu (Comet) are not distinguished. Their inclusion in such a composition, however, would not be unusual. Only in the Deccan, such as in the eighth-century Lankesvara cave in Ellora, Maharashtra, are similar undifferentiated representations of the nine planetary divinities encountered.

In Rosenfield (1966) and Trabold (1975) this small, richly designed altarpiece has been attributed to central India and the ninth–tenth centuries. Apart from the Deccani practice of not distinguishing the planets, the design of the torana and Parvati's figure is very distinctive of Later Chalukyan art as, for instance, in the Mahadeva temple in Ittagi (see Sarma 1972). This temple was built in 1112, and thus the bronze is not likely to be far removed in date. In its ornateness it seems closer to the Hoysala sculptures than to the earlier Ambika.

With its gradually widening and receding base the altarpiece is strongly architectonic in conception. The dense ornamental design is relieved by the many voids that enhance the depth of the principal figures and highly animated lions rearing on the elephants' heads forming a *gajaviḍāla* (elephant-lion). The tiny figures on top, however, are almost lost among the luxuriant foliage behind them. (For a closely related Vaishnava altarpiece see M. Chandra 1964, pl. XXIV.)



*130 Durga Killing the Buffalo Demon*
Karnataka, Halebid (?); twelfth century
Chlorite schist; 34 in (86.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.70.1.1
Literature: Trabold 1975, p. 21, no. 18; Pal 1976, pp. 54–56, fig. 26; Newman 1984, p. 28, fig. 21.

Neither the iconography nor composition of this stele differs substantially from the earlier north Indian version of the theme [3, 50]. The goddess kills Mahishasura as he emerges from the buffalo and also drives her sword into the shoulder of a second demon. As in other such representations Durga seems psychologically uninvolved in the struggle.

The second demon kneels like a timid devotee, and the drama of the occasion clusters around the hapless figure of Mahishasura and the lion biting into the rump of the buffalo who falls to the ground. The representation of the buffalo is remarkably lifelike.

While there is nothing unusual in the weapons Durga holds with her eight hands, a few of them have interesting forms. The trident is double-edged, and the bell is crowned by the prongs of another trident. This seems to be characteristic of Hoysala representations of the theme. In Vajrayana art the emblems are often similarly crowned with the prongs of the thunderbolt. Another peculiarity is the addition of a *shaṭ-kona* (star hexagram), with a flame in the center within the wheel held in the goddess's uppermost-right hand. The wheel is also surmounted by a face of glory. The star hexagram became a regular part of the wheel in later south Indian representations of the emblem. A tantric symbol, it is a combination of two equilateral triangles, the upright triangle symbolizing the male and inverted triangle the female. The six angles also signify the six meditational centers in the body according to Yoga doctrine (see Begley 1973, pp. 84–85, including notes).

More so than the Kubera [127] this sculpture typifies the highly ornate style preferred in the Hoysala Kingdom during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The sculptor, however, has carved away the stone immediately around the goddess's figure. With the multiple arms, ornate emblems, plethora of ornaments, richly adorned crown, and intricate arch, the composition is overbearing in its dense and exuberantly displayed adornments. (For a comparable image in the Kesava temple in Somnathpur, Karnataka, see *Marg* 31 [December 1977]: fig. 51.)





*131 The God Surya*
Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh; thirteenth century
Magnesian schist; 26 in (65.8 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar G. Richards
M.86.94.1

Characteristic of south Indian images, the sun god is represented here without his northern attire [see 47]. Although he appears naked, below his elaborate belt and several rows of chains across his thighs, he wears a dhoti, which is suggested by the pleats falling between and along his legs. Otherwise he is like his north Indian form, wearing a tall crown and *makara-kuṇḍala* (makara earrings) and holding two lotuses. He is accompanied by two females, Usha (Dawn) and Pratyushā (Predawn), who shoot shafts of light to dispel the darkness. The aureole above the two goddesses is filled with intertwined lotus rhizomes, another unusual iconographic feature for such stelae. Engraved in the front projection of the pedestal is a tiny figure of a charioteer with four crudely rendered horses. The chariot usually is drawn by seven steeds.

Undoubtedly the sculpture is from the Deccan, but its exact provenance is difficult to determine. While it shares some features, such as the lotus rhizome, with the Chalukyan celestial cymbalist [128] and the shape of the crown and compressed wavy design of the nimbus with Hoysala sculptures, it is signifiicantly different. Compared with Chalukyan and Hoysala sculptures, this relief is shallow, and the figures appear flattened against the background. The shape and proportions of Surya are unusual. The shoulders and hips are remarkably broad and joined by a high, rather narrow waist. The legs are quite heavy and stiff, and the face small and narrow. Although Surya is bedecked with a generous amount of ornaments, they do not appear as overbearing as in earlier Chalukya or Hoysala sculptures, and the two females are clad and adorned with remarkable simplicity. Despite their slightly awkward stance, the figures are spirited and along with the meandering lotus rhizome animate the scene. The kind of shallow, flattened relief used in this stele is commonly seen in memorial reliefs known as hero stones and narrative friezes of the twelfth–thirteenth centuries in Karnataka and the neighboring areas of Andhra Pradesh that once comprised the kingdom of the Kakatiya dynasty (c. 1150–1325). The sculpture could be from Andhra Pradesh.

*132 Vishnu in His Cosmic Sleep*
Karnataka or Andhra Pradesh; thirteenth century
Copper alloy; 4⅝ in (11.7 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Pratapaditya Pal
M.76.147.3

This is a rare representation of the theme in metal, and its size indicates that it probably was used in a domestic shrine [see 36]. Although this is the principal icon in many of the important Vaishnava temples all over southern India, metal images, either used in festival processions or for personal devotion, are relatively few. While the basic iconography and composition are the same as in the earlier north Indian version, there are some noteworthy differences. Only two figures are shown in the bronze: the supine Vishnu and seated Lakshmi. Brahma may have been accommodated on a lotus, whose broken stem is still attached to Vishnu's navel. With one of his right hands Vishnu supports his head. He holds the conch in his other right hand and the wheel in his upper-left hand. He rests his lower-left hand on his knee. The club lies below his lower-right arm.

Compared with reliefs from Uttar Pradesh [36], Vishnu seems more relaxed and assumes a naturalistic position. His right leg is placed on Lakshmi's lap, who massages it; the left leg is folded across the right. The coils of the serpent along the upper edge of the high pedestal appear as a mattress or cushions. The serpent hood above Vishnu is a later replacement. Interestingly the sculptor has etched two different water designs in the two halves of the pedestal separated by a narrow molding. In the upper portion the design consists of rolling waves that look almost like floral scrolls. In the lower section meandering vinelike waves crisscross one another and enclose highly abstracted aquatic creatures such as a fish and tortoise.

Although the figures are summarily modeled and their plastic quality is not as smooth, stylistically they are more related to Chalukyan [126, 129] rather than to Hoysala figures [127, 130]. The extreme attenuation of Lakshmi's figure is reminiscent of female forms on temples of the Kakatiya dynasty in Warangal District, Andhra Pradesh.



*133 The Child Krishna*
Karnataka; sixteenth century
Ivory with color and gold; 7½ in (19.0 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by the Louis and Erma Zalk Foundation and Dr. and Mrs. Joseph Pollock
M.84.34
Literature: Pal 1985, p. 79, fig. 24.





Rich in elephants, Mysore has remained a famous center of ivory carving since ancient times. This charming sixteenth-century ivory figure of the baby Krishna demonstrates the skill of the master carver and continued vitality of the local tradition. As in most ivory figures the statuette is enriched with color: black for the luxuriant hair, eyebrows, pupils; red for the lips, sectarian mark on the forehead, nails; green for the top of the lotus on which the figure stands; and gold, much of which is now lost, for the ornaments and petals of the lotus base.

Barely able to stand, the child smiles gently as he holds two butterballs [see 116]. Krishna was inordinately fond of butter, evident by his ample belly. Although a cowherd's child, Krishna is here represented as a princely baby profusely bejeweled. As was customary he is given a necklace with a pendant of tiger claws. A sagging string of bells hangs below his waist. This delightfully engaging figure is modeled in the round, and the details of ornaments and coiffure are rendered with exquisite finesse.



*134 The Dancing Ganesa*
Karnataka; sixteenth century
Copper alloy; 19⅞ in (50.3 cm)
Purchased with Harry and Yvonne Lenart Funds
M.86.126

The dedicatory inscription on the rectangular base of this impressive bronze informs us that it was donated by Rāmappā "in honor of the Lord." Whether the "Lord" of the inscription refers to Ganesa himself or to the deity of the temple to which it was dedicated is uncertain. The language and script of the inscription are Kannada, which is prevalent in Karnataka. Thus a Karnataka provenance for this bronze is certain.

Balancing himself on his left leg on a lotus, the bulky Ganesa gracefully dances. The only iconographic difference from other representations of Ganesa [146] is the outstretched left arm holding a bunch of mangoes rather than the noose. In Bengali reliefs of Ganesa [105] a bunch of mangoes is a common element and is generally placed at the apex of the stele but is sometimes held in his hand.

Although dedicated in Karnataka and probably manufactured locally in Ramappa's town or village, stylistically there is very little to distinguish this bronze from contemporary bronzes produced in Tamil Nadu. A comparison with a near-contemporary Ganesa [146b], generally regarded as a bronze from Tamil Nadu, makes their kinship obvious. Apart from the one difference in the attributes, the only noteworthy variation is the stringlike treatment of the ornaments that entwine themselves around the Karnataka Ganesa's ample form. The trunk of the dancing Ganesa is treated slightly differently and is decorated with three stripes, single circle, and a third eye. These differences probably reflect the sculptor's individuality rather than a distinct style.



*135 A Cow Adoring the Sivalinga*
Tamil Nadu; c. 800
Granite; 21¼ in (54.0 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart
M.76.48.1
Literature: Pal 1976, p. 35, fig. 6; Pal 1978a, p. 21, no. 9; Pal 1986, p. 78, no. 21; Dye 1981, p. 81.



This granite relief depicting an unusual theme probably once served as a tympanum in a Saiva temple. Within a cavelike niche formed by the billowing, bifurcated tongue of a face of glory, a cow shelters a Sivalinga even as she licks it in adoration. Two heraldic lions stand on their hind legs like sentinels at the bottom of the arch, and several others parade above as if they are climbing a cave. At the lower right a dwarf rides a makara; the same motifs, now broken away, were probably on the opposite side.

The relief very likely represents a local legend associated with the village Govindaputtur on the northern bank of the river Kollidam (Coleroon) in Tamil Nadu. An ancient Saiva shrine, it was visited by Appar and Sambandar [157], two important Saiva saints who may have lived in the seventh century. Both recorded the local tradition of a cow attaining salvation at Govindaputtur by adoring the Sivalinga of the local temple known as Tiru-Vijayamaṅgai.

The exact provenance of this relief is difficult to determine. Its style is closely related to those of sculptures in the Siva temple at Kalugumalai (Kramrisch 1954, pls. 88–94). Known locally as Vettuvankoil, this temple was excavated from live rock probably during the reign of Varugana I, one of the great kings of the Pandya dynasty, who ruled from 765 until 815. The district of Tinnevelly was within the Pandya Kingdom about 800. Although the monuments created by their rivals, the Pallavas, are better known, architecture and sculpture also flourished in the Pandya Kingdom.

The sculptor of this fascinating relief obviously delighted in rendering animals. His unfamiliarity with the lion is obvious; although animated, the animals appear like puppies, especially in contrast to the much larger cow. The bovine form has been realized with utmost economy, yet the representation is remarkably naturalistic as is evident by the turn of the animal's neck and arch of the back.

*136a–b Siva's Bull*

*a,* Tamil Nadu; ninth century (?)
Granite; 25 in (63.5 cm)
Gift of Norman I. Newman in appreciation of the ancient Indian artists
M.86.341

*b,* Tamil Nadu; fifteenth century (?)
Copper alloy; 9½ in (24 cm)
Purchased with Harry and Yvonne Lenart Funds
M.85.159.1

The bull is the mount of Siva, although when the two came to be associated is not known. In literature he is generally called Nandi, but this appears to be the result of iconographic confusion (see B. Bhattacharyya 1958). In Saiva temples he usually has his own open shrine facing the sanctum of his overlord. In southern India, however, the surrounding walls of temples are also embellished with sculptures of seated bulls, which act as guardians and identify the temple from a distance. The stone bull may well have served such a purpose.

The bronze bull probably belonged to a small temple or domestic shrine. The large, hollow, cylindrical base on which he sits is unusual. It very likely enclosed a stone or terra-cotta peg or mound.

The exact date of such isolated bulls is difficult to determine. Both animals sit identically and are rendered with naturalism and empathy. The stone example was certainly made earlier. Although the bronze sculpture is attributed to the fifteenth century, it could be somewhat older. Compared with the stone bull, it certainly has a more expressive head and seems livelier with its raised neck and protruding tongue with which it seems to be licking its lips. In contrast the stone bull is weathered and has a more reposeful bearing.



136b



*137 The God Vishnu*
Tamil Nadu; late ninth century
Copper alloy; 5 in (12.7 cm)
Indian Art Special Purpose Fund
M.87.106

Vishnu is represented gracefully seated on a rather large lotus placed on a shallow, square plinth, which is mostly broken. The aureole is missing; one of the pegs to support the aureole at the back, however, remains. The artist thoughtfully provided a small lotus to support Vishnu's dangling right leg. As is customary, he wears a tall crown and holds various attributes: a round object, flaming wheel, conch, club.

This bronze stylistically belongs to a small group of Vishnu images whose provenance is uncertain (see Pal 1969–70; Pal 1977a, p. 109). One of these, now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, was published as an early bronze from Kerala, while another in the Indian Museum, Calcutta, has been consistently regarded as a Pallava bronze of the eighth–ninth centuries (Sivaramamurti 1963, pl. 11c; Srinivasan 1963, pl. VIII). The Los Angeles Vishnu is so close to the Pallava example that it cannot have been produced very much later. In both the proportionately large lotus with identical design is placed on a plain, square plinth.

The lower-right hand of Vishnu in both displays the gesture of charity while holding the fruit of knowledge. The club is missing in the Calcutta bronze, but the position of the lower-left hand is similar to that in later Vishnu images [153]. In the Los Angeles bronze, however, the club is held horizontally as in a Vishnu in the now-dispersed Pan-Asian collection (Pal 1977a, p. 109). A Pallava element missing in both is the placement of the sacred cord around the lower right arm of Vishnu. The feature, however, is present in a standing Vishnu dated to the eighth–ninth centuries (Sivaramamurti 1963, pl. 10b), which is stylistically very close to the Los Angeles bronze. Its provenance unfortunately is not known. Another unusual feature of the museum's bronze is the manner in which his waistband tassels drape the lotus base.

While a Kerala attribution for such bronzes cannot be dismissed, a Pallava attribution is by no means certain. Some bronzes including this piece show affinities with ninth-century sculptures of the Pandya Kingdom. Thus a southern Tamil Nadu provenance and a late ninth-century date for this Vishnu seems to be defensible.





138a

*138a–b Siva as Lord of the Dance*

*a,* Tamil Nadu; c. 950
Copper alloy; 30 in (76.2 cm)
Given anonymously
M.75.1
Literature: LACMA 1975, pp. 26, 149, no. 12; Pal 1975a, p. 53; Dye 1981, p. 47; Kramrisch 1981, pp. 114–16, no. 94; Swami Durgananda 1988, pp. 20–21.

*b,* Tamil Nadu; c. 1100
Granulite; 33 in (83.8 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart
M.71.82
Literature: Pal 1976, pp. 36, 41, 44, no. 7; Pal 1978a, p. 23.

Although made for different purposes, both sculptures depict Siva as Nataraja (Lord of the dance), a term generally used to describe this particular form, which originated in Tamil Nadu. The earliest stone representations of the image date to the early tenth century (see Lippe 1975). Called in Tamil Adavallan or Adavallar, meaning "Master Dancer," Nataraja was the family deity of the imperial Cholas, and for this reason his images became widely popular in Tamil Nadu from the early tenth century. His most celebrated temple is at Chidambaram, Tamil Nadu, where the principal icon is not a Sivalinga but a silver Nataraja.

The earlier of the two sculptures is the bronze, which was once used as a festival image. The stone example originally was placed in a *devakoshṭha* (subsidiary shrine) on the south face of a temple. This arrangement was introduced sometime between 950 and 975 (see Barrett 1976). The bronze and stone examples differ only in minor details. The lotus base and aureole of fire are excluded in the stone representation.

The manifold significance of this fascinating image is discussed in Sivaramamurti 1974 and Coomaraswamy 1948, as well as in an essay by Nagaswamy (1987) which provides information about the cult's religious background. Briefly the dance symbolizes the five activities of Siva as the cosmic deity: creator, preserver, destroyer, remover of illusion, and dispenser of grace or salvation.

Firmly pressing on a dwarf with his right foot, Siva swings his raised left leg across his body, making the movement more dynamic than in north Indian representations of the divine dancer [40, 99]. The frenzied, destructive force of the cosmic process is also expressed by his flying hair, hourglass-shaped drum and fire in his upper hands, and ring of flames that surround the master dancer. The flames

represent illusion, and the crushed dwarf signifies ignorance. The salvific aspects are expressed by the second right hand displaying the gesture of reassurance and downward disposition of the second left hand pointing to the god's left foot, source of grace. The tiny figure lodged in his matted hair above the kettledrum in the bronze is the river goddess Ganga. Thus in these images Siva is the cosmic mountain and tree of life, for in the bronze his flying hair, with flowers and leaves at the ends, appears like spreading branches.

Although the two sculptures are similar in iconography, their stylistic differences are pronounced. Apart from their notably different proportions, the shape and features of the faces are quite distinct. The hair and matted crown are treated distinctly as is the rendering of the dwarf below the foot. In the stone sculpture the creature is so crushed that he is motionless; in

138b



the bronze he seems to be unmoved by his helpless situation and looks up in adoration at Siva. Moreover his palms are open and he points his index fingers as if to indicate the source of his salvation. Equally lively is the snake, which is watching him.

This treatment of the dwarf, slim, attenuated proportions of Siva, crownlike arrangement of the hair decorated with feathers in front, and oval shape and simplicity of the flame motif are features that place the bronze example among a handful of Natarajas assigned to the first half of the tenth century. The proportions of the figure are much closer to the well-known Nataraja of about 900 from Nallur, Tamil Nadu (Nagaswamy 1971), and another in the British Museum of the first half of the tenth century (Barrett 1976, pl. XVIII). The peculiar shape of the aureole is first encountered in the Nallur Nataraja and again in the example of 981 from Vriddhachalam, Tamil Nadu (Barrett 1976, pl. II). In all three examples the aureole is narrower at the bottom, whereas in most bronzes of the second half of the tenth century the difference is less pronounced as the shape moves toward a complete circle in the eleventh century. Thus a date around 950 for the museum's bronze seems clear from these comparisons.

For reasons explained at length elsewhere (Pal 1976), the stone Nataraja is very likely a work of the late eleventh or early twelfth century. The face is much broader and body fleshier but of graceful proportions as characteristic of figures of this period. The crown of matted hair is of the conventional variety, and the dwarf is not as lively as in tenth-century sculptures.



*139a–b* *Siva as the Supreme Teacher*

*a,* Tamil Nadu; 950–1000
Granulite; 32⅞ in (83.6 cm)
Gift of James H. Coburn III
M.82.221
Literature: Pal 1982b, fig. 5.

*b,* Tamil Nadu; fourteenth–fifteenth century
Copper alloy; 5⅝ in (14.3 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harold J. Nicolais
M.76.98a–b
Literature: Pal 1982b, fig. 10.

Known as Dakshinamurti, this image of Siva as a teacher commonly is placed in a subsidiary shrine on the southern wall of a temple in Tamil Nadu. The expression *Dakshinamurti* literally means "the southern or south-facing image," but it metaphorically is the "image of grace and wisdom" (see Pal 1982b). Of the two examples in the collection the stone sculpture was meant for a temple wall and the more elaborate bronze probably graced a domestic shrine. The more complete bronze will be described first.

Pressing on the dwarf of ignorance with his right foot, Siva is seated on a stylized lotus base. A banyan tree was once attached to the back. Siva holds in his upper-right hand a snake; his lower-right hand forms the gesture of teaching. In his upper-left hand he holds a flaming torch and in his lower-left hand a book. Four bearded ascetics sit at the feet of the divine teacher, forming his audience. In these images Siva is portrayed as the omniscient young master conveying supreme knowledge to much older listeners.

The sculptor of the stone example has emphasized Siva's youth by giving him a boyish visage. As the sculpture is somewhat abraded, it is difficult to identify the attributes and figures. There probably was a dwarf of ignorance below the right foot, and the forms of at least two bearded ascetics can be recognized at the right of the pedestal. Two attributes can be clearly discerned. The lower-right hand forms the teaching gesture, and the lower-left hand probably held a book. The object in the upper-left hand is probably the flaming torch and that on the right may have been a snake or rosary.

The stone sculpture is much earlier than the bronze. The stylized lotus base, circles on the plinth, and dry, somewhat coarse modeling point to a date in the fourteenth–fifteenth centuries for the bronze. Although the stone sculpture has been assigned (see Pal 1982b) to the early eleventh century, it exhibits elements found in much earlier sculptures. In tenth-century Dakshinamurti images Siva generally

139a



139b



assumes the stance seen in the bronze. The posture of Siva in the stone sculpture was fashionable in the ninth century (see Lippe 1975 for dated examples of both types). The posture is almost identical to that in a circa 950 Dakshinamurti from Takkolam (Lippe 1975, fig. 2) and a ninth-century example from Kaveripakkam, now in the Madras Museum (Pal 1982b, fig. 4). The hairstyle of Siva changes considerably after the tenth century, while the simple, manelike horizontal spread of the hair in this sculpture closely resembles that seen in a late ninth-century relief at Valakanampudi, Tamil Nadu (Lippe 1978, pl. 175). The absence of the tree above the head also indicates an early date. Thus a tenth-century date for this sculpture seems consistent with the evidence.

*140a–b* *The Buddha Sakyamuni*

*140a–b* *The Buddha Sakyamuni*
Tamil Nadu, Nagapattinam; eleventh century

*a,* Granulite; 29½ in (74.9 cm)
Gift of Mr. Anthony A. Manheim
M.80.227
Literature: Pal 1976, pp. 50–51, fig. 21; Newman 1984, p. 24, fig. 12.

*b,* Copper alloy; 11⅞ in (30.2 cm)
Gift of Doris and Ed Wiener
M.72.29
Literature: Pal 1974a, p. 23, no. 20; Trabold 1975, p. 27, no. 32; Pal 1976, pp. 50–51, fig. 22.

140a





140b

These two images of Buddha Sakyamuni are probably from Nagapattinam, an important center of Buddhist art in southern India. Although made from different materials, each typifies one of the two principal Buddha images popular in the region. Both probably belong to the eleventh century, and while they differ in iconography they reflect the same unchanging style from the tenth to thirteenth centuries. While the bronzes of Nagapattinam have been better studied, no attempt has yet been made to establish a general chronological framework for the Buddhist sculpture of Tamil Nadu.

In the stone sculpture the Buddha is seated in meditation on a throne, his hands rest on his lap in the *dhyanamudra* gesture of meditation. The garments are so diaphanous that the body appears almost naked. His nimbate head is encircled by a flame finial typical of Nagapattinam Buddha images. The throne back is embellished with rampant lions and makaras, above which are two celestials, regally crowned and ornamented. Each holds a flywhisk and demonstrates the gesture of adoration. This type of adoring celestial and throne design is characteristic of Nagapattinam images and also is encountered in Sri Lanka.

In the bronze the Buddha is a columnar standing figure, displaying the gestures of reassurance with his right hand and charity with his left hand. His garment is more visible because of its volume and concentric lines along the front. The garment treatment is so stylized and geometric that the edges fall along the arms to form an almost perfect rectangle. In contrast to the austere garment edge, the body is remarkably plastic with its flowing contours.

A distinguishing iconographic feature of Nagapattinam Buddhas seen less frequently in northern images is the addition of a flame above the cranial bump. While this is generally regarded as an insignia of the yogic powers of the Buddha, more likely it represents knowledge or wisdom, which is essential for enlightenment. It also is common in Sri Lankan Buddha images and may have originated there.



*141 The Goddess Kali*
Tamil Nadu; eleventh century
Copper alloy; 19½ in (49.5 cm)
Museum Acquisition Fund and funds provided by Harry and Yvonne Lenart
M.83.48
Literature: Pal 1985, pp. 78–79, fig. 22.

The goddess represented is known as Kali or Chamunda. While elsewhere in India, especially in the north, she is depicted as an awesome figure with an emaciated body and frightening countenance in keeping with her role as a bloodthirsty goddess of death [38, 74], artists in Tamil Nadu downplayed the macabre and generally portrayed her as an attractive woman. Except for the two tiny fangs protruding from her mouth and flamelike hair forming a halo behind her head, this figure is as sensuously elegant as is Parvati [142a–b].

Like Parvati she is seated gracefully on a lotus. Her four attributes are a trident, which is broken, drum, noose, and skull cup, all emblems borrowed from Siva. In addition she is given Siva's third eye, crescent moon, and serpent. These three attributes are never assumed by Parvati in the south.

In the subtle modeling and exquisite rendering of details in front and back this eleventh-century bronze represents the epitome of the Chola-period style. The frontal stance is relaxed and unstrained. The beautifully proportioned form is contained by uninterrupted contours. The ornaments are kept to a minimum, and their simplicity enhances the smoothly robust form. The bronze stylistically is comparable with several others of the early eleventh century (Sivaramamurti 1963, figs. 47a, 48a–b). The ornamentation, however, is much simpler, reminiscent of the magnificent Yaśodā and her son Krishna, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York (Pal 1977a, pp. 128–29, no. 76).





*142a–b The Goddess Parvati*
Tamil Nadu; eleventh century

*a,* Copper alloy; 3 in (7.7 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.13
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 93, no. 104.

*b,* Copper alloy; 4¼ in (10.8 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.14
Literature: Trubner 1950, p. 38, no. 65; Dohanian 1961, no. 38; Rosenfield 1966, p. 93, no. 103.

Both bronzes are small and probably were made for use in domestic shrines. In each the goddess sits gracefully in *lalitasana* with the left arm bearing the weight of the body. The oblique position of the right leg is different from conventional representations of this posture [141, 143]. The right hand may have held a lotus. Although no attributes are discernible, the figure probably represents Parvati or Uma. This particular posture of the goddess is also encountered in Somaskanda images, although not in the museum's version [143], where she is accompanied by Siva and Skanda or Kumara (see Nagaswamy 1970, pl. XXVIII, figs. 58–60).

Although the iconography of the two figures is identical, stylistically they are quite different. The figural form, proportions, shape and features of the face, ornaments, and design of the lotus base are different. The larger figure [*b*] is more naturalistically modeled and heavier than the more petite figure [*a*], which has a slighter frame and narrower waist and the transitions of her body are subtler and smoother. The simple design of the lotus on which she sits is unusual. Following the rectangular shape of the socle, the petals are left plain. The larger figure has been dated earlier (Rosenfield 1966), but the greater simplicity of the smaller figure does not seem to conform with a later date. A stylistically comparable figure for *a* may be seen in a bronze discovered in the Nallur temple and dated to the end of the eleventh century (Nagaswamy 1971, pl. V). The museum's bronze may be somewhat earlier.

142a



142b



*143 Siva with Uma and Skanda*
Tamil Nadu; eleventh century
Copper alloy; 22⅛ in (56.2 cm)
Gift of Christian Humann
M.72.98
Literature: Pal 1976, pp. 38, 44, fig. 9.

Like the Nataraja, this Somaskanda group is typical of Tamil Nadu sculpture. The image is called Somaskanda because Siva is represented together with Uma, or Parvati, and their son Skanda, or Kumara (sa [with] + Uma + Skanda). Thus this is the Tamil version, but much more simplified, of the north Indian familial group known as Uma-Mahesvara [34, 51]. The son Ganesa is never included. Although the figure of the child Skanda is missing, the empty cushion between the two deities indicates his placement at the center of attraction. Also unlike north Indian Uma-Mahesvaras the composition of these bronzes is much more formal.

Siva is a majestic figure with four arms, who sits quite detached from the other figures. Uma too sits frontally but is more relaxed and graceful. In Pallava images she occasionally holds Skanda on her lap. Skanda's figure usually is the liveliest and may be either seated or standing with knees bent like a child who is still learning to walk. He holds the lotus bud with one or both hands, while his mother may or may not hold a single lotus.

Siva's missing attributes, which would be held in his two upper hands, are the battle-ax and deer. The two lower hands display the gesture of reassurance (right) and that known as *siṁhakarṇa* (lion's ear). This particular gesture is unusual as normally the left hand displays the gesture of charity. (For a discussion of the date see literature above.)





*144 The Goddess Sita*
Tamil Nadu; c. 1100
Granulite; 52¼ in (132.1 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.80.6.5
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 59, no. 48; Pal 1972a, p. 29; Pal 1976, pp. 37–44, fig. 8.

When first published the goddess was identified as Parvati, who usually holds a lotus. In two subsequent publications the goddess was identified with Rukmini, one of the two wives of Krishna [147], primarily because of her distinctive *dhammilla* hairstyle and stance to the right of her spouse. This position is indicated by the thrust of the right hip and flower held in the left hand. Parvati always stands on Siva's left, and hence the posture and attribute are reversed [152]. The posture and hairstyle, however, are also characteristic of Sita, wife of Rama. Moreover, unlike Rukmini, the lady here does not have the breastband. Hence an identification with Sita seems more likely.

The goddess nevertheless is an attractive example of the ideal female form as created by Chola sculptors. Her long, graceful legs, flat abdomen, and modest stance subtly express her sensuousness. She has small, delicate features and wears a tender expression. Her ornaments are not intrusive and do not obscure the contours of her slender, elegant form.

While the figure immediately brings to mind the lively freestanding sculptures of the wives of ascetics in the mid-twelfth-century tableau from Darasuram, Tamil Nadu, now in the Tanjore Art Gallery (Lippe 1978, p. 276), very likely it was carved earlier. The work retains the suave contours and smooth plasticity of eleventh-century sculptures, while the modeling of the Darasuram figures is harder and more arid. A circa 1100 date would also be compatible with the rise of the Vaishnava cults, spurred by the teachings of the great saint and philosopher Rāmānuja (c. 1017–1137).

*145 Siva as the Cosmic Pillar*
Tamil Nadu; early twelfth century
Granulite; 48¼ in (112.5 cm)
Gift of Christian Humann
M.74.138.4
Literature: Pal 1976, pp. 40, 46, fig. 11.

Like the Nataraja [138] and Dakshinamurti [139], this image, known as Lingodbhavamurti, is a stock motif of south Indian Saiva iconography. Represented only in stone, it too is a major image and is placed in the subsidiary shrines of a temple. The expression *lingodbhava-murti* literally means "the image that arises from the linga." The myth that this image encapsulates and the image itself probably preserve the more ancient cult of the cosmic pillar.

The myth tells us that once Brahma and Vishnu began arguing about which of them was the supreme god. As they continued to debate, there appeared a flaming pillar that seemed to stretch endlessly. Deciding to search for its summit and base, Brahma flew up toward the sky in the guise of a gander, while Vishnu, assuming the form of a boar, burrowed into the earth. Neither was successful, and when each returned to earth Siva emerged from the pillar to assert his own supremacy.

The hieratic figure within the elliptical cavity fringed with flames is Siva. The pillar also is garlanded at the top. Siva holds the battle-ax and deer with his upper hands and places his lower-left hand against his thigh; the broken right hand would have displayed the gesture of reassurance. Richly adorned, his torso and legs are naturalistically modeled with an emphasis on the rolling abdominal flesh and articulation of the knees and the shapely legs. At the bottom of the pillar the boar-headed, agile Vishnu seems about to plunge into the ocean, while diagonally across at the top of the image the gander is ready to fly away.

A stylistically related stele representing Subrahmaṇya, a popular south Indian form of Kumara, is in the Avery Brundage Collection at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco (Kramrisch 1981, p. 81).



*146a–b The God Ganesa*

*a,* Tamil Nadu; twelfth century
Quartz-feldspathic rock; 32 in (81.2 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim
M.74.122.2
Literature: Pal 1976, pp. 42, 46–47, fig. 13;
Newman 1984, p. 25, figs. 14, 25.

*b,* Tamil Nadu; fifteenth century
Copper alloy; 9 in (22.9 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck
Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.15
Literature: Trabold 1975, pp. 26–27, no. 31;
Rosenfield 1976, p. 95, no. 106.

146a



The stone Ganesa once graced a subsidiary shrine in a temple, and the bronze was a personal icon for a domestic shrine. Each holds the attributes of a typical south Indian Ganesa (clockwise beginning with the lower-right hand): broken tusk, battle-ax, noose, sweetmeat, which he is busy scooping up with his trunk). In the stone image the god is seated, and in the bronze he stands gracefully. The bronze certainly represents Ganesa as a child as is clear from his pudgy body and the modeling of his arms and legs. In the stone figure he is a somewhat older dwarf. Here the sculptor has emphasized the dwarf aspect of the god by giving him an enormous belly and short, stumpy legs. We must also admire the sculptor's powers of observation, for the god sits with some difficulty as would an obese dwarf. This kind of posture adds a comical touch to the divine form and seems to have been popular in southern India and Java rather than in the north. In the stone example a serpent adorns the ample belly.

Of the two the stone Ganesa is certainly earlier and stylistically is related to the Nataraja [138b] and Lingodbhavamurti [145] as well as to sculptures in the twelfth-century gopuram (gateways) to Chidambaram temple (Harle 1963). The three sculptures may have once belonged to a small temple. The bronze Ganesa, thought to be as late as the seventeenth century, may belong to the fifteenth. Although the trunk is not as naturalistically rendered as in the stone image, where the sculptor has shown the skin's folds, the human body is convincingly modeled, and the sculpture probably is not later than the Karnataka dancing Ganesa [134]. Rather unusual are the three circles adorning the trunk. The circle between the eyebrows may represents the third eye, a feature borrowed from Siva's iconography.



146b

*147 Krishna with His Wives and Garuda*
Tamil Nadu; twelfth century
Copper alloy; Krishna, 34 in (86.4 cm); Rukmini, 27 in (68.6 cm); Satyabhama, 28 in (71.1 cm); Garuda, 19½ in (48.9 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Hal B. Wallis
M.70.69.1–4
Literature: Johnson & Cairns 1972, pp. 32a–33a; Pal 1972a; LACMA 1975, pp. 149–50, no. 14.

Among the more spectacular of the museum's Chola bronzes, this group—representing Krishna along with his wives Rukmini on his right and Satyabhama on his left and his mount Garuda—has been the subject of a monograph and hence a brief discussion will be provided here (see Pal 1972a). In such groups Krishna is known as Rajamannar (Leader of the people). He is portrayed as a royal cowherd, and the image type basically is the same as that employed for the Siva image known as Vrishavahanamurti (Image with the bull mount) [148]. Here Krishna's left arm rests on Satyabhama's shoulder, thereby indicating his greater affection for her. Rukmini is slightly more aloof as befitting a dignified elder wife or chief queen. Krishna's right hand would have held a shepherd's crook. Like Siva's, Krishna's hair is so arranged as to appear as a tall crown, although it is not matted.

The sculptor has very clearly emphasized the difference between the two wives. Rukmini is given the *dhammilla* hairstyle [see 144], and a band holds her breasts together. Satyabhama's breasts are free, and she has the same hairstyle as Krishna. The fact that she stands on Krishna's left and supports his left elbow in a gesture of intimacy emphasizes her status as the favorite wife. Although both have the same ornaments, their saris are of different designs. Finally the two figures are differently proportioned, Satyabhama being somewhat fuller and heavier. While the two women are about the same size, Garuda is the smallest figure as befitting his humble position as the god's mount, which also is expressed by his devotional attitude.

Although the four figures stand separately on detached lotuses, together they form a harmonious composition, which is held together by a basic rhythmic pattern that flows easily from one figure to another. Each individually is well modeled and exquisitely detailed. Especially engaging is the figure of Garuda, who adds a touch of whimsy.

Rukmini

Krishna



Satyabhama



Garuda



*148 Siva with His Bull*
Tamil Nadu; twelfth century
Copper alloy; 4½ in (11.4 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James Singer
M.86.249.1

This charming small bronze depicts Siva standing against his bull. A popular subject during the Chola period, the image is known as Vrishavahanamurti. The only difference between this image and the standard figure of Siva [152] is the inclusion of the bull and placement of the right- or left-lower hand on the bull's head (here his muzzle), depending on the orientation of the animal (see Krishna in entry 147). In early Chola images the other hand is usually shown resting against the god's thigh, but in this example it forms the gesture of reassurance.

There is a slight awkwardness in Siva's posture. The waist is rather attenuated, and the stomach bulges prominently. Some details are lost due to the repeated applications of ritual unguents. The sculptor failed to model carefully the area surrounding Siva's rump, and much of the animal's back remains unfinished, presumably because these parts would not have been easily visible. Nevertheless the bronze is unlikely to have been made before the twelfth century. In most Chola-period bronze representations of this theme Siva is depicted with two arms. The exceptions are a ninth-century bronze and fifteenth-century example (Sivaramamurti 1963, pls. 20a, 52a). Both follow the same iconographic tradition with the lower-right hand forming a circle and may have held an object. The gesture of reassurance, formed by one of the lower hands, as in this figure, is encountered in a solitary bronze, where Siva (as Vrishavahana) and Parvati are shown androgynously (Sivaramamurti 1963, p. 98). This bronze is considered to belong to the twelfth century. The Los Angeles bronze generally is related to this unusual Vrishavahanamurti and is certainly much earlier than the fifteenth- or even thirteenth-century versions.



*149 The Elephant of Sasta*
Tamil Nadu; twelfth–thirteenth century
Copper alloy; 6½ in (16.5 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar G. Richards
M.86.148



Sasta, meaning "Ruler of the country," is the Sanskrit version of the Tamil word *Chatta*. A popular deity in southern India, he is a form of Aiyanar, an important local deity of the south. Aiyanar, meaning "Lord" in Tamil, generally is regarded as a village guardian deity. The principal difference between Chatta and Aiyanar is not in their iconography but in their mounts. Aiyanar rides the horse, while Sasta's vehicle is a white elephant. Although all such figures loosely are identified as Aiyanar, the elephant rider should properly be referred to as Sasta.

In this bronze the figure of Sasta is missing; it must have been cast separately and held in place by the peg that remains attached. The mahout is seated precariously on the elephant, and the object in his right hand is probably an elephant goad. The elephant is engaged in lifting or throwing a figure with his trunk. The exact significance of this gesture is not known, but he or she may represent an enemy being destroyed by Sasta in his role as a protector god. Except for this demonstration of violence, the elephant stands quietly on rather inert, stumpy legs and is gaily caparisoned with garlands, bells, and lotuses as are ceremonial elephants in India today.

At least two other published examples are known, and both apparently were found in Togur, Tamil Nadu (Sivaramamurti 1963, p. 47b; Srinivasan 1963, fig. 316). The gods are identified as Aiyanar, and although they are almost identical, Sivaramamurti dates his to the twelfth century, while Srinivasan dates his piece to the seventeenth century, demonstrating the uncertainty of dating south Indian bronzes. There can be little doubt that Srinivasan is wide of the mark and that Sivaramamurti's date is more correct. The elephant is closely comparable with those in contemporary Hoysala temple reliefs (see *Marg* 31, no. 1 [1977]: fig. 30), where the animal is about to hurl a warrior as in the Los Angeles example, which is more akin to that published by Srinivasan. In neither published example is the elephant engaged in picking up a human with his trunk. Nevertheless all three examples were probably made in the same workshop.



*150 An Elephant*
Tamil Nadu; thirteenth century
Copper alloy; 2 in (5.1 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.18
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 96, no. 109; Pal 1981a, p. 48, no. 33.

The exact function of this charming elephant is not known. Although the lively animal has tusks, it appears to be a calf. The elephant is the mount of the gods Indra, Aiyanar, and Sasta [149]. The absence of any pegs for the attachment of a figure would preclude its service as an actual mount. The posture of the caparisoned animal suggests that he is about to take on a rider. A hole on the stomach demonstrates that the animal may have been attached to a pole in a stand. The sawed-off and rounded tusks may suggest that it was meant to be a child's toy. Its diminutive size further corroborates such a suggestion.



*151 The Saint Chandikesvara*
Tamil Nadu; thirteenth century
Copper alloy; 16½ in (41.9 cm)
Gift of Dr. Alston Callahan
M.84.216

Like Sambandar [156], Chandikesvara, known also as Chandesvara or Chandesa, is one of the sixty-four *nayamnars,* or Saiva saints, revered in southern India. Unlike Sambandar, however, little is known about them. Chandesa is often shown in stone reliefs being garlanded by Siva.

According to Chandesa's legend, there once lived a young boy named Vicharasarman. One day while witnessing a cowherd assault a cow, Vicharasarman decided to tend the animals himself. The satisfied cows began to yield extra milk, with which Vicharasarman bathed a Sivalinga he had made with sand. The former cowherd expressed his discontent by reporting to the villagers that Vicharasarman was misusing the milk. The boy's father came to investigate and caught Vicharasarman bathing the linga with milk. Angry with his son, the father kicked the linga, whereupon the boy did not hesitate to cut off his father's leg with an ax. Siva was so delighted that he appeared with Parvati and gave the boy the title Chandesa or Chandesvara, made



him chief of his *gaṇas* (dwarf attendants), and decreed that the devotee also must be worshiped daily in a Saiva temple. This explains why Chandesa's image is always present in a Saiva temple and why he is shown standing in adoration with an ax in the crook of his arm as in this bronze. Chandesa is an ideal *bhakta* (devotee) rather than a poet-saint, like those who traveled throughout the Tamil country popularizing the religion with their devotional songs.

Although the iconography of this figure follows convention, stylistically it is quite unlike most Chola bronzes. The shape and features of the face, black color of the metal, design of the hair ornaments and short dhoti, and manner in which the lotus base has been rendered contribute to its uniqueness. In most Chola bronzes the lotus petals are modeled, but here they are incised. These differences may indicate that the bronze was created in the Pandya rather than Chola sphere of influence or that it was the work of an inventive, enterprising sculptor. The dark color of the bronze may have been iconographically determined, for according to some traditions Chandesa is to be represented as a black figure. The closest stylistic and technical parallel for this sculpture is another bronze Saiva saint from Tiruppurambiyam in Tanjore District (Srinivasan 1963, pl. CLI, fig. 243). The two bronzes may have been made in the same atelier.





*152 Siva and Parvati*
Tamil Nadu; thirteenth century
Copper alloy; 16¼ in (41.2 cm)
J. LeRoy Davidson Memorial Fund
M.80.121
Literature: Pal 1981a, pp. 80–81, fig. 7.

Siva and Parvati stand on two separate lotuses atop a rectangular socle. The two pegs attached to the top of the socle once supported an aureole. The rings at the bottom were used to secure the piece in the temple or onto a pallet when it was carried in procession.

In such images Siva is known as Chadraśekhara, Moon-crested One. The crescent moon is prominently attached to his crownlike arrangement of matted hair. Siva is closely associated with the moon because both symbolize fertility and healing. The representation depicts the god in his standard iconographic form prevalent in southern India. The upper-right hand holds the battle-ax, and a deer, looking like a toy animal, is balanced on two fingers of the corresponding left hand. The lower-right and lower-left hands exhibit the gestures of reassurance and charity, respectively. Siva stands upright; Parvati's posture is more elegant. Her left hand hangs gracefully along her side, and in her right hand she probably once held a lotus.

Noteworthy in both are their intricately chased ornaments and luxurious garments with finely rendered floral patterns. The garments in Chola-period bronzes generally are rather plain, their volume suggested by horizontal folds. Bronzes, mostly of goddesses, occasionally are found for which the sculptor has emphasized the rich textile designs (see Sivaramamurti 1963, figs. 17, 21, 28a, 66, 81b). All these bronzes are dated to the eleventh–twelfth centuries. Their similar textile patterns may be a trademark of a particular family of sculptors.





*153 The Vaishnava Triad*
Tamil Nadu; thirteenth century
Copper alloy; Vishnu, 40¼ in (102.2 cm); Sridevi, 32½ in (82.5 cm); Bhudevi, 32 in (81.3 cm)
Gift of Anna Bing Arnold
M.70.5.1–3
Literature: Pal 1976, pp. 45, 47, fig. 16.

This group represents the classic Vaishnava triad of southern India with Vishnu, known also as Srinivasa (the resident of Sri), flanked by his two spouses Sridevi (Lakshmi) on his right and the earth goddess Bhudevi on his left. The more than forty-inch figure of Vishnu is probably the largest south Indian bronze of its kind known.

The tall and majestic Vishnu is distinguished by a high, cylindrical crown. His upper hands display the flaming wheel and conch. The lower-right hand forms the gesture of reassurance, while the lower-left hand once rested on the handle of the now-missing club. As in most bronze Chola-period male figures, the belt sports an impressive clasp with a face of glory. The missing attributes of the two goddesses are flowers: a pink lotus for Sridevi and blue lotus for Bhudevi. The goddesses are given different earrings and *maṅgala-sūtra* (auspicious threads), and Sridevi is further distinguished by a breastband. Such minor iconographic variations notwithstanding, they both are goddesses of wealth and plenitude.

Once again, as in Siva-Parvati images [152], the male stands firm as a column while the goddesses strike graceful poses. Although individually cast, the figures were conceived to be part of a single composition. A perfect circle can be circumscribed from the extended arm of Sridevi, moving upward to the summit of Vishnu's crown, down the arm of Bhudevi. As in the Rajamannar group [147], the sculptor took particular care to distinguish the two women by varying their proportions and contours. Bhudevi is the fleshier of the two ladies. All three have rather elongated faces dominated by prominent noses, which may be characteristic of later Chola bronzes.



Vishnu's belt

Bhudevi



Back of Sridevi



*154a–b The God Siva as Bhairava*

*a,* Tamil Nadu; early thirteenth century
Granulite; 31 in (78.7 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Paul E. Manheim
M.70.42.4
Literature: Glynn 1972, fig. 18; Pal 1976, pp. 41, 46, fig. 12.

*b,* Tamil Nadu; fifteenth century
Copper alloy; 3½ in (8.9 cm)
Gift of Neil Kreitman
M.86.338.3

Of the two representations, the stone sculpture was once used in a subsidiary shrine in a temple and the diminutive bronze served as a personal icon. Although both share identical attributes, they exhibit interesting minor differences.

The expression *bhairava* literally means "terrible" or "horrible" and is an appropriate sobriquet for Siva as lord of dread and death. Very likely the word was derived from *bhera,* meaning "kettledrum," the rattle of which signifies battle and death. In these south Indian images the drum is one of Bhairava's attributes; others are a skull cup and noose, which too are associated with death. The fourth emblem is his trident weapon. These are precisely the attributes of Kali in southern India [141].

Like Kali's, Bhairava's hair rises above his head to create a halo of flames. In the bronze the coiffure has assumed the form of a snake hood. In the stone image Bhairava's face has a more terrifying expression than does Kali's. The rolling eyes and furrowed brows considerably enhance the terror of the visage. In both Siva is naked except for his ornaments. While in the bronze he wears a bejeweled belt, in the stone two intertwined serpents encircle his waist. Moreover in the bronze the sacred cord is brought all the way down to the ankles.

Another important iconographic difference between the two is the absence of the snarling dog in the bronze. Siva's mount is the bull [136], but Bhairava's is the dog, which may indicate that Bhairava originally was an independent god of death who was identified with Siva. The skull cup in Siva's left hand serves as a beggar's bowl and represents Siva's hostility to Brahma, patriarch of the Hindu deities. It is said to represent one of Brahma's heads, which Siva cut off. According to the Lingodbhava myth [see 145], when Brahma returned from his search, he apparently lied or refused to admit Siva's supremacy. The enraged Siva cut his head off and to atone for killing a brahman was cursed to wander the country as a naked beggar.

Stylistically the stone Bhairava is closely related to the Siva in the Lingodbhava image, and probably they are near contemporary. The bronze certainly has different proportions and appears to be somewhat squat like a dwarf or boy. Bhairava here may be represented in his Vaṭuka, or dwarf, form. Although his ornamentation is not elaborate, his simple hairstyle would indicate a later date. A long sacred cord falling along the right leg occurs in an eleventh-century Bhairava, now in the Tanjore Art Gallery (Sivaramamurti 1963, pl. 52b).

154a



154b



*155 A Goddess with Attendant*
Tamil Nadu; c. 1300
Bronze; 6½ in (16.5 cm)
Given anonymously in memory of Mahadevan Natesan
M.87.181

The goddess in this and another example (Srinivasan 1963, fig. 296) holds a lotus in her right hand while resting her left hand on the head of an attendant, who carries a bowl in her left hand. Srinivasan does not specifically identify the goddess.

A few similar bronzes all belonging to Tamil Nadu are known. An earlier and much larger bronze representation is still in worship in the Siva temple at Kodumudi, Coimbatore District, Tamil Nadu (Sivaramamurti 1963, fig. 89). The Kodumudi figure is identified as Tripurasundari (Beauty of the three cities), spouse of Siva in his Tripurāntaka (Destroyer of three cities) manifestation. Tripurasundari is the focus of one of the most important and esoteric of Sakta cults, known as Sri-Vidyā, the embodiment of supreme wisdom.

There are interesting differences between the image at Kodumudi and the Los Angeles bronze. In the temple bronze the goddess wears a tall crown. In the museum's example both ladies do not wear diadems and have different hairstyles. While the goddess's hair of the Los Angeles example is gathered in a distinctive bun as in an image of Annapurna (Dispenser of food), now in the Sarabhai collection, Ahmedabad (Sivaramamurti 1963, fig. 66a–b), the attendant's hairstyle is similar to that seen in images of the crawling Krishna [159a–b]. Moreover the pot in her hand looks like a grain container. The object in the right hand is unrecognizable. It is not improbable that the broken right hand of the goddess once held a spoon, in which case she may represent Annapurna, although no attendant accompanies the representation in the Sarabhai collection.

What is most unusual about this bronze is that the goddess is shown wearing sandals. Rarely in Indian art are deities, with the exception of Surya and Revanta [2, 97], shown wearing any kind of footwear. In Tamil Nadu, however, in his Bhiksthāṭana, or Beggar's Form, Siva wears similar wood sandals (Sivaramamurti 1963, fig. 87). Moreover at least in one sculpture of a female nursing a child, probably representing Yasoda and Krishna, the mother's right foot seems to be similarly shod (Sivaramamurti 1963, fig. 79a). Stylistically as well this figure of the nursing Yasoda is extremely close to the Los Angeles bronze, and they may well have been made in the same workshop.



*156 The Saint Andal*
Tamil Nadu, Madurai District; fourteenth century
Copper alloy; 4½ in (11.4 cm)
Purchased with funds provided by Mr. and Mrs. Edgar G. Richards
M.86.94.2

The unusual feature of this well-modeled lady is the bird, meant to be a parrot, perched on her right wrist. The parrot is generally associated with the goddess Meenakshi of Madurai or the Vaishnava *alvar* (saint) Andal. That she is Andal rather than Meenakshi is evident by the distinctive coiffure and absence of a crown as well as the way she wears the sari.

The lifedates of Andal are not known, but her foster father, Periyalvar, was very likely a contemporary of the Pandya king Śrī Māra Śrīvallabha (r. 815–62). When Andal was discovered wearing the flower garland threaded by her father for his daily worship of Vishnu before it was offered to the god, her father refused to offer the garland to Vishnu as it had become polluted. Vishnu appeared to the father in a dream and rebuked him for not offering him the used garland. Andal's blessed state was realized, and in a visit to the famous Vaishnava shrine at Srinangar, Tamil Nadu, she is said to have disappeared as soon as she entered the shrine. As she is believed to be the bride of Vishnu, she came to be identified with Bhudevi, one of his wives. Some of her devotional hymns are still sung in Vaishnava temples and during Vaishnava weddings.

Because Andal is associated with Bhudevi she usually is represented like her, except that while Bhudevi wears a crown, Andal has a coiffure (*koṇḍai*) like that of Sita or Rukmini [144, 147]. The parrot is a symbol of love and perhaps signifies the passionate intensity of her devotion to Vishnu, whom she regarded as her husband. Not only did she dream of her marriage with him, but her precocious use of his garland clearly is symbolic of this union. Her sari too is wrapped differently, more like a skirt, as befitting a village woman rather than a goddess.



*157 The Saint Sambandar*
Tamil Nadu; late fourteenth century
Copper alloy; 17 in (43.2 cm)
Gift of Dr. Robert G. Majer
56.8
Literature: Davidson 1968, p. 64, no. 87; Pal 1976, pp. 47–49, figs. 18–20.





Frequently confused with the dancing Krishna, this figure in fact represents the Saiva saint Sambandar. The difference is so subtle as to be scarcely noticeable. The child Krishna dances with a butterball in his right hand, whereas the forefinger of Sambandar's right hand points upward to signify an episode in the saint's life (Dehejia 1987).

Sambandar, given the sobriquet *Tirujñāna,* Wise One, is among the more important Saiva saints, whose hymns are still sung in temples throughout southern India. As a child he was once taken to a temple and left in the courtyard while his father went to bathe in a tank. The child began to cry, and Parvati herself appeared and offered him milk. When his father returned and asked who had fed him, the child pointed to the sky, the abode of the deities, which explains the gesture of his right hand.

Depicted standing with a milk cup or dancing, Sambandar is always shown naked. It is not clear why he is represented only as a child when in fact he did grow old and traveled frequently singing hymns to Siva. Perhaps the fact that he was fed by Parvati in his infancy led to his identification with the child Skanda. Even more difficult to understand is why he should have been portrayed as a dancing infant and why the artist should have modeled him on the dancing Krishna. The Saivas may have been attempting to create their own child saint to counter the influence of the Vaishnava child god.

Whether such figures represent Krishna or Sambandar and despite the use of the lotus base, the figure is human. The divine character of Siva and Ganesa cannot be ignored even when they dance, but Sambandar and Krishna dance endearingly and joyously, without the awkwardness of a child goaded into performing. This is undoubtedly a representation of a precocious child who has mastered posture and gesture. That he is divinely inspired is evident by his graceful self-confidence.



*158 The God Subrahmanya*
Tamil Nadu; fifteenth century (?)
Copper alloy; 6⅝ in (16.8 cm)
Gift of Vera and Lester Barron
M.82.167

This unfinished and discarded figure represents Subrahmanya, the Good Brahman, a favorite name of the Hindu god Kumara or Karttikeya in southern India. In complete examples the attribute in the upper-right hand is a spear and a thunderbolt in the corresponding left hand. The second right hand clearly forms the gesture of reassurance, while the remaining left hand would have displayed the gesture of charity as does the god's father, Siva [152].

The bronze is important for containing all the casting channels, normally filed off after casting. Clearly the bronze was so flawed during casting as to be unredeemable and hence was discarded.





159a



159b



*159a–b Krishna the Butter Thief*

*a,* Tamil Nadu; fifteenth century
Copper alloy; 3 in (7.6 cm)
Julian C. Wright Bequest
M.79.152.180

*b,* Tamil Nadu; sixteenth century
Copper alloy; 4½ (11.4 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.16
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 96, no. 107; Pal 1974a, p. 15, no. 12.

Both bronzes represent the infant Krishna crawling with a ball of butter. Krishna was inordinately fond of butter, which he would steal as often as he could. The theme was very popular in Tamil Nadu, and most representations are small and intended for domestic shrines. In such images Krishna is always naked and richly adorned with ornaments. He is also distinguished by a tall, flaring hairdo, encountered only in the art of Tamil Nadu. It is clearly a local hairstyle, although one cannot be certain whether it was an artistic invention or copied from life.

Certainly the posture of the child god in both sculptures is taken from life and is the result of the sculptors' keen observation. The forms are naturalistically modeled with the buttocks and legs well articulated. While the bodies of the two figures are similarly proportioned, their faces are shaped differently and have distinct features. The later bronze also is given an additional necklace of a type generally seen in Kerala bronzes.

*160 The Boar Avatar of Vishnu*
Tamil Nadu; c. 1600
Copper alloy; 8¼ in (21.0 cm)
Gift of Anna Bing Arnold
M.87.162.2

There are many versions of the myth of Vishnu's Varaha (Boar) avatar. According to one, because of the machinations of the demon Hiraṇyakaśipu or because Earth was unable to bear the evil of the world, she sank under the ocean. As the preserver of the universe and the cosmic order, Vishnu assumed the form of a boar and dove into the ocean to rescue her.

In this metal image the artist has eschewed the mythic aspect in favor of an iconic representation. Although Varaha strikes the same heroic posture that he did in the earliest north Indian sculptures (see Pal 1986, p. 198), he is not shown rescuing the earth. Instead one of Vishnu's spouses, Lakshmi, holding the lotus, is seated on his left thigh as is Parvati in Uma-Mahesvara images. Characteristic of Tamil Nadu Vishnu figures, the god has four arms and holds his customary attributes [see 153]. Only his porcine head distinguishes this figure as the Varaha avatar.

The bronze stylistically is close to the Hanuman [161] and has the same stocky proportions and modeling. As with the Orissan dancing Krishna [116], a lotus supports Varaha's left foot. Apart from the penchant for plump figures, the sculptors of the Vijaynagar period in Tamil Nadu embellished their figures in a different manner from their forebears. Note the distinctive design of the sash and folds of the dhoti as well as the decorative flair expressed by surrounding the navel of both figures with a heart.



*161 The God Hanuman*
Tamil Nadu; c. 1600
Copper alloy; 9⅜ in (23.7 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Pratapaditya Pal in memory of J. J. Klejman
M.85.291.1

This bronze is unusual for showing Hanuman (see 37, 118) genuflecting and stretching out his arms in an expression of intense devotion to his master, whose image he once must have faced. Also only his head is monkeylike. Otherwise he is entirely human, for even his tail, prominent in earlier representations, has been omitted. Although he is a paragon of humility, he is given a strongly modeled body as befitting a heroic figure.



*162 The God Rama (?)*
Kerala; fifteenth century
Copper alloy; 6 in (15.3 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.72.1.17
Literature: Rosenfield 1966, p. 96, no. 108; Pal 1974a, p. 48, no. 16.



Except for the serpent canopy, the principal attributes—the bow and arrow—are those of Rama, deified hero of the *Ramayana* and an avatar of Vishnu. Kama, god of love, also has the bow and arrow, but his bow usually is made of flowers. The regal bearing and heroic posture (*vīrāsana*) is also appropriate for Rama, although he generally is depicted as a standing figure. The bow rests against the aureole, and the arrow is placed against Rama's right shoulder. With his right hand he forms the gesture of teaching. Thus the figure appears as a heroic king seated in audience. His swelling chest and robust stance further enhance his heroic appearance. Although the serpent canopy generally is not given to Rama, it is not inappropriate since he is an avatar of Vishnu, whose head is frequently shielded by the multihooded Vasuki [see 36].

The most noteworthy feature of the bronze is the broad face with aquiline nose and large, staring eyes, distinctive of Kerala figures and quite different from contemporary sculptures from Tamil Nadu. Also characteristic of Kerala bronzes are the cascading locks around the shoulders, which are ornamented with floral projections, carpet with prominent folds, summary delineation of the lotus petals, and large inverted comma-shaped flames on the aureole. The design of the crown varies from those worn by deities in contemporary sculptures from Tamil Nadu.



*163 Krishna the Divine Flutist*
Kerala; fifteenth century
Copper alloy; 4⅜ in (11.2 cm)
From the Nasli and Alice Heeramaneck Collection, Museum Associates Purchase
M.75.4.13
Literature: Coomaraswamy & Heeramaneck 1935, p. 10, no. 19; Trubner 1950, p. 35, no. 58; Dohanian 1961, no. 39; Rosenfield 1966, p. 77, no. 76.

Known as Veṇugopāla, the Flute-Playing Cowherd, this image of the Hindu god Krishna is a popular icon for domestic shrines in Vaishnava homes all over the subcontinent.

The youthful god stands with his legs crossed at the ankle and plays a bamboo flute. Stories about Krishna emphasize that the melodious lure of his flute was irresistible to the *gopīs,* or female cowherds, who symbolize the human soul. In such images the god's cowherd aspect is emphasized by his flower garlands and bouffant hairstyle adorned with peacock feathers. In sculptural images he is shown standing below an arbor, suggested here by the aureole. Interestingly the stylized flame design looks like a conch. While the identification of the figure is not doubted, in literature cited above the bronze has been misattributed to eastern or northern India and dated between the sixth and tenth centuries or later. That it is a Kerala bronze of about the fifteenth century seems reasonably certain by a comparison with entry 162.







*164 The Goddess Kali*
Kerala; late fifteenth century
Wood; 44 in (112.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Robert Kuhn in memory of Richard Kuhn
M.85.287

This finely carved figure, which has suffered from exposure to the heavy rains of Kerala, once served as a bracket in a temple.

The goddess represented is Kali. Her iconography differs considerably from that of the earlier Chola bronze [141]. Here the goddess is portrayed like a guardian, holding the sword (only the hilt now remains in her grasp) with her right hand and resting her left hand on a rectangular shield of the same shape as that held by Durga in a Hoysala sculpture [130].

Her face and features are similar to those portrayed in the headpiece [165], and her flying hair, entangled with rearing serpents, forms a high crown above her head, enhancing her forbidding appearances. The proportions and shape of the body with well-formed breasts, swelling belly, and heavy thighs are characteristic of Kerala sculptures of the Vijaynagar period. Also typical are the pleats and pocketlike folds of the garment over her thighs. Close stylistic parallels for the sculpture may be seen in the bracket figures of the superstructure of the 1471 temple at Kazhakuttam, Kerala, as well as sculptures in the temple of 1542–45 at Elktumanur (Kramrisch 1959, pls. 14, 34–35).



*165 A Headpiece for the Goddess Kali*
Kerala; late fifteenth century
Wood with color; 41 in (104.1 cm)
Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart
M.77.60
Literature: Pal 1978a, pp. 30–31, no. 17; Kramrisch 1981, pp. 32–33, no. 28.

The most spectacular example of woodcarving in the collection, this gigantic headpiece was once worn by a male devotee who impersonated the goddess Kali during the performance of a ritual myth in Kali temples in Kerala. Fortunately for her mortal surrogate, Kali does not play an active role in this performance. Although far more elaborate, the headpiece relates closely to the masklike, painted faces of Kathakali dancers that distinguish the dance-drama of Kerala from other classical Indian dances.

In Pal (1978a) and Kramrisch (1981) the head was identified as belonging to Bhairava [154a–b] rather than to his female counterpart, Kali. The mistake is understandable for nothing in the face betrays its sex, while snakes are an attribute of Bhairava rather than Kali. A comparison with the wood image of Kali in the collection [164] strengthens the identification.

In its compositional grandeur and refined carving the headpiece remains a tour de force. Every element moves, writhes, and surges, upward, downward, and laterally, the dominant motif being the snake. They are present below and knotted above the head and form a lively border as they rear along the edge like sentinels. Vegetative bands emerge from the mouths of makaras to form a nimbus immediately around the head. A face of glory protects the goddess at the apex, and two heraldic, rather comical lions stand like guardians at the base. The foreparts of two elephants serve as her ear ornaments.

The most expressive and engaging part of the headpiece is the head of the goddess herself. As Kramrisch has written so eloquently: "In this wood carving . . . superhuman frightfulness had been converted into a self-contained pattern of perfect order. Its vehemence is arrested in the face of 'Bhairava' [Kali]; its horror dilates his [her] three bulging eyes. Tusks that return upon themselves in circles and the upper part of the ears, similarly convoluted, intensify the stare of Bhairava's [Kali's] face."



*166 Pietà*
Kerala; c. 1700
Wood with color; 31⅛ in (79.0 cm)
Gift of Dr. and Mrs. Sarle Cohen in memory of Morris Hassel
M.85.280



The Pietà, symbolizing the passion of Mary, is one of the most familiar and moving themes of Christian iconography. As elsewhere in the world Indian Catholic churches often have small shrines dedicated to the image of the disconsolate mother mourning her son. The basic composition of the image appears to have been established in Europe by the fourteenth century, and since then countless versions have been rendered. Whether delineated by the great or the unknown, rarely does a Pietà fail to move the devotee.

This particular example in wood was sculpted for a church in Kerala, perhaps around 1700. While its European prototype is not known, the artist was clearly familiar with the iconographic convention. The entire sculpture was once painted; blue still adheres to the Virgin's mantle. With her veiled head prominently bent, her small, youthful face looks down with sadness at her son's bearded face. While one hand supports the head of Jesus, the other lifts his left arm with great tenderness as if she were trying to revive him. Christ's right arm hangs inert and grazes the pedestal, but the legs are not rigid. The veins of the arms and legs are rendered articulately as is the rib cage. The crown of thorns has been omitted, and the red-brown hair falls in a heavy mass.



167 *Architectural Sections*
Kerala or Tamil Nadu; eighteenth century
Wood; 64 in (162.5 cm) each
Gift of Christian Humann
M.75.115.1–2

Such elaborately carved architectural segments are common to south Indian stone or wood architecture. Found in religious and secular buildings, they serve either as brackets or piers. They also are frequently used in mobile temples constructed to carry images in festival procession. The intricate carving makes these examples seem extremely light, and it is unlikely that they could have supported much weight.

An extraordinarily complex composition of figures and ornamental designs, the sections are ornately carved on each side so that the front and back cannot be distinguished. The preeminent motifs are galloping animals carrying militant warriors accompanied by foot soldiers. The sizes of the animals and riders progressively diminish from the top down. Horses are easily recognizable, and the composite animal in the middle is the *vyāla*. His extraordinary strength is indicated by his ability to carry an entire elephant with his own elephantine trunk. This mythical animal is also known as a *gajaviḍāla* as he combines the form of the elephant and lion. In addition male and female figures serve as caryatids below the horse. The rider of the large horse on the top is clearly a regal figure as he is shaded by a parasol.





# Appendix

## Selected Inscriptions

Most dedicatory inscriptions on objects in the collection were read and translated by Dr. Gouriswar Bhattacharya. The inscriptions on Jain images were also read and translated by Dr. U. P. Shah. His translations are included if they differ from Dr. Bhattacharya's. Some inscriptions were read and translated by the author.

With one exception, all inscriptions are in the Sanskrit language. The exception is a dancing Ganesa [134] from Karnataka in which the inscription is written in the Kannada language and script. The script used in Kashmiri bronzes is known as Sarada. All other north Indian inscriptions are written in regional variations of the Brahmi script. While most dedicatory inscriptions on Hindu and Buddhist sculptures are brief, providing only the names of donors, Jain inscriptions consistently furnish more substantial information, occasionally including names of places and sculptors and always a date. The inscription on the Kashmiri bronze Vishnu [14a] is unusually interesting, and among the Jain sculptures the inscription on the marble Sarasvati [63] is of great importance for the history of Indian art.

## 11 *The Infant Buddha*

M.87.233

*Inscription*
Deyadharmoyaṁ parahekara [?] Śrīdevasya

*Translation*
This is the pious gift of Śrīdeva who is [?].
GB

## 14a *The God Vishnu*

M.80.6.2

*Inscription*
[1] Rājñya Śrī-Sukhapūrṇasya rājāmātyo vyadhīyata | adhvaraṃ . . . ras-āntāya [2] sudhāsārasya Śārṅgiṇaḥ ||

*Translation*
A royal officer of King Sukhapūrṇa performed a sacrifice in honor of the god Śārṅgin, who is a shower of nectar, for the destruction of [?].
GB

## 37 *A Head of Hanuman*

M.86.338.8

*Inscription*
Siddham [symbol] Śrī-mānya-Brāhma-[ṇḍī]-svara devadhā

*Corrected Inscription*
Siddham [symbol] Śrī-mānya-brahmāṇḍeśvara devatā

*Translation*
Success! The respectful god, the lord of the universe.
GB

*Commentary*
Dr. Bhattacharya comments that the paleography of this inscription is from the thirteenth or fourteenth century. According to Dr. Bhattacharya, the symbol for the expression *success,* which begins the inscription, came into vogue in central and western India after the twelfth century.
PP

## 60 *A Jain Altarpiece*

M.71.26.38

*Inscription*
[1] Āsīnnāgendra-kula Lakshmaṇasurīrnnitāsanta- [2] matiḥ || tadgachchhegururabhavannāmnasit Śīlabhadragaṇiḥ [3] Śishyeṇa Mūlavasatau Jinatrayamakāryyata || Bhṛigu- [4] kachchhe tadīyena Pārśvillagaṇinā varm || Saka sam- [5] vat || 910 ||

*Translation*
In the Nāgendra-kula [lineage of Nāgendra] flourished Lakshmaṇasurī of extremely peaceful nature. In his *gachcha* [line] came the teacher [pontiff] Śīlabhadragaṇi, his [the latter's] pupil, Pārśvillagaṇi, caused to be made this beautiful *Jina-traya* [group of three Tīrthaṅkaras, a *tritīrthika* image], in the shrine [known as] Mūlavasati in Bhṛigukachchha, in the Śaka year 910 [988].
UPS

*Commentary*
This reading and translation are quoted from Shah 1955–56. Two misprints in the text have been corrected, and emendations, within square brackets, have been added.
PP

## 62 *A Jain Altarpiece*

M.75.90

*Inscription*
Siddham [symbol] Saṃ 1178 Jyaishṭha śudi 6 Śanau grahapaty-anvaye sādhū-Kuṇḍha-suta-Sāṃtanena karmma-kshayārtthaḥ ratna-trayaṃ pratishṭhāpitam-iti || Mahīpati-vijñānikena ghaṭitaṃ ||

*Translation*
Success! In the [Vikrama] year 1178 [1121], in the sixth day of the bright half of the month of Jyeshṭha [May–June], on Saturday, the Three Jewels [images of the three Tīrthaṅkaras] were caused to be consecrated by Sāntana, the son of Sādhu-Kuṇḍhā and belonging to the Grahapati family, for the cessation of [his] mortal deeds. [The images] were made by artisan Mahīpati [or, by the royal artisan].
GB

Om. On Saturday the sixth of the bright half of [the month] Jyeshṭha, [in] samvat 1178 [1122] in the lineage of Grahapati, Sādhu [merchant] Kuṇḍha, along with son Sāntana, installed [the] Ratnatraya [Three Jewels] for destruction of [fruits of] actions [karma]. Image fashioned [cast] by artist Mahīpati.
UPS

*Commentary*
The expression *karmma-kshayārtthaḥ* has been differently translated by the two scholars. The donor presumably expected that he would be released from the bondage of karma and thereby attain freedom from the chain of rebirth by dedicating this image. Although the expression *Mahīpati-vijñānikena* may imply "by the royal artisan," since *mahīpati* literally means "lord of the earth" or ruler, as suggested by Dr. Bhattacharya, very likely here it is the sculptor's name.
PP

## 63 *The Goddess Sarasvatī*

M.86.83

*Inscription*
Siddham [symbol] Saṃvat 1126 vaiśākha vadi 11 Śanidine mahattama-śrī-Varaṇāga-sutena mahāmātya-śrī-Saṃmukena kārita-Sarasvati-pratimāyāḥ Saṁvat 1209 phāguṇa-vadi 8 Bhauma-dine saṃjāt-āpaghāte bhūyo-pi samvat 1210 veśākha-vadi 5 some mahaṃ-śrī-Paraśurāmena pratimetaneyaṃ [?] Śrīmad-Evam-devāchāryyaiḥ pratishṭhita ghaṭitā sutradhareṇa Jagadevena yasorthinā sthāpitā paṃḍitena dhīmatā ||

*Translation*
Success! In the [Vikrama] year 1126 [1069] on the eleventh day of the dark fortnight of the month of Vaiśākha [April–May], on Saturday, the image of Sarasvatī which was caused to be made by the minister Śrī-Sanmukha, the son of the officer Śrī-Varaṇāga, was damaged in the [Vikrama] year 1209 [1152] on the eighth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Phālguna [February–March], on Tuesday, [hence] once again [it was] made to copy [?] in the [Vikrama] year 1210 [1153] on the fifth day of the dark fortnight of the month of Vaiśākha, on Monday, by the officer, Śrī-Paraśurāma. [The image] was consecrated by the holy Evaṃdevāchārya [and was] made by the carpenter, Jagadeva aspiring for fame [and] installed by Paṇḍit Dhīmān.
GB

*Commentary*
Although Dr. Bhattacharya has translated the word sūtradhāra as "carpenter," the expression generally was used to denote both an architect and a sculptor. The word literally means "one who holds a string."
PP

## 64 *A Jain Altarpiece*

M.67.72.17

*Inscription*
Saṃvat 1488 varshe chai. va. 5 Ūkeśa-jñātīya-ma-Mālā-bhāryā-Maṇikade-suta-maṃ-Nāsana-bhāryā-Ṭachī-suta-Dogā-bhā-Parādi[de]-kuṭumba-yutena sva-śreyorthaṃ śrī-Vimalanātha-bimbaṃ kāritaṃ pra. Tapā-gachchha-śrī-Somasuṃdara-sūribhiḥ ||

*Translation*
In the year [Vikrama] 1488 [1431] on the fifth day of the dark half of the month of Chaitra [March–April] the image of the holy Vimalanātha was caused to be made by the following members of the Ūkeśa [or Upakeśa] family viz Mahattara Mālā, his wife, Māṇikadevī, [their] son, Maṇḍalīka Nāsana, his wife, Ṭachi, [their] son Dogā, his wife Parādevī along with [their] relatives for one's own welfare. [The image] was consecrated by the holy Somasundara-Sūri belonging to the Tapā-gachchha.
GB

*Commentary*
As with other such inscriptions on Jain bronzes after the fourteenth century, many words denoting titles, relationships, or common usage have been abbreviated. Dr. Shah's reading differs from Dr. Bhattacharya's in minor details. He reads the name of Mālā's son as Vāsana rather than Nāsana. He also suggests that this son too was a *mahattara* rather than a *maṇḍalīka*. According to Dr. Shah, Somasundara suri [1430–1499] was the fiftieth pontiff of the Tapāgachcha branch of the Śvetambara Jains.
PP

## 65 *An Altarpiece with Twenty-four Jinas*

M.70.42.11

*Inscription*
Samvat 1521 varshe jyeshṭha sudi 13 Gurau Raṇāsana-vāsi-śrī-Śrīmāla-jñātīya-śre-Dharsā-bhā-Dharmāde-suta-Bhojākena bhā-Bhali-pramukha-kuṭumba-yutena sva-śreyase śrī-Śaṃtinātha-chaturviśatiḥ paṭṭah kāritaḥ pratishṭitaḥ śrī-Suvihata-sūribhiḥ || śrīr-astu

*Translation*
In the year [Vikrama] 1521 [1464] on the thirteenth day of the bright half of the month of Jaishṭha [May–June], on Thursday, the Chaturviṁśati *paṭṭa* of the holy Śāntinātha [i.e., Śāntinātha with the images of twenty-three other Tīrthaṅkaras] was caused to be made by Bhoja, the son of the merchant Dharsā and his wife Dharmādevī belonging to the Śrīmāla family and residents of Raṇāsaṇa, with his wife Bhalī and other relatives, for their own welfare. [The image] was consecrated by the holy Suvihata-Suri. Let there be prosperity.
GB

*Commentary*
Dr. Shah correctly reads the name of the donor as Dharma rather than Dharsā as in Dr. Bhattacharya's rendition.
PP

## 73 *The Goddess Tara*

M.76.2.30

*Inscription*
Deyadharma-yaṃ sthavira-Śākyamitra-syaḥ ||

*Translation*
This is the pious gift of the elder monk Śākyamitra.
PP

## 75 *The Buddha as the Conqueror of Mara*

M.73.4.11

*Inscription*
Deyadharmā-ya Vimalaprabha-syaḥ ||

*Translation*
This is the pious gift of Vimalaprabha.
PP

## 76 *The Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara*

M.81.8.3

*Inscription*
Deva [deya]dh[rme]-yaṃ Kāñchi-vinirgato-bhikshu-vi[vī]rya-varmaṇaḥ ||

*Translation*
This is the pious gift of the monk Vīryavarmaṇ, who is from Kāñchi.
PP

## 83 *The God Mahakala*

M.71.110.3

*Inscription*
Siddham [symbol] devadharmmo-yaṃ . . . pada-Śoañjana-sunū-Nanuḍikasyaḥ ||

*Translation*
Success! This is the meritorious gift of Nanuḍika, the son of Śoañjana.
GB

## 100 *The God Vishnu*

M.82.227

*Inscription*
Siddham [symbol] devetammo-yaṃ Gāmila-Mahāṃvata-[va]dhu-Praniḍikāyā

*Translation*
Success! This is the meritorious gift of Praniḍikā, the daughter-in-law of Gāmila-Mahaṃvata.
GB

## 124 *The Dancing Ganesa*

M.86.126

*Inscription*
Rāmappānavarindanīgeśvamiya varigēśevarta

*Translation*
Donated by Rāmappā in honor of the Lord [Svāmī].

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